

Practical Truths  
Tending to Promote the  
*Power of Godliness:*  
Wherein

Several Important *DUTIES*, are  
Urged, and the Evil of divers com-  
mon *SINS*, is Evinc'd;

Delivered in Sundry  
**SERMONS.**

By *INCREASE MATHER*,  
Teacher of a Church at *Boston* in  
*New-England*.

Joh 17. 17. *If ye know these things, Happy are ye, if ye do them.*

Phil. 3. 1. *To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous: but for you it is safe.*

2 Pet. 1. 13. *Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance.*

ver. 15. *Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease, to have these things alwayes in remembrance.*

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# THE CONTENTS

## I.

**T**hat to Pray unto God, is, as the Duty of every Man, so the Practice of every godly Man.

## II

That Men ought to Pray unto the Lord for the Pardon of their Sins, & the Salvation of their Souls, in a Time wherein He may be found.

## III.

That the true Fearers of God, will be constant in the Practice of Family-Prayer.

## IV.

That Sincere Christians, will Pray in Secret Day & Night without Ceasing.

## The Contents.

### V.

*That Baptised Persons are under Sacred and awful Obligations.*

### VI.

*That the Lord's Supper is an Ordinance which Believers are under an Indispensible Obligation to Observe.*

### VII.

*That it is the Property of a Sincere Godly Man, Not to Sit with Vain Persons.*

### VIII.

*That Sleeping at Sermons is a great, and a dangerous Evil.*

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TO THE  
SECOND CHURCH and CON-  
GREGATION at BOSTON in  
NEW-ENGLAND.

Most Dearly Beloved,

CONCERNING the Reasons inducing to the *Publication* of these *Sermons*, besides the desires of many among your selves ( who have readily undertaken for the charge of this *Impression* ) and of others also; in remote corners of this wilderness ( whose judgement I value ) that have importuned me to write on some of these Subjects; together with the success which God was pleased to give unto *him* when first Preached; I must confess, that the consideration of the Subjects themselves here treated upon, was principal in moving me thereunto. Is it not easie to be in overmuch inculcating that great duty of *PRAYER*, in the constant, and conscionable practice whereof, so much of Religion doth consist. And I must say, that if any amongst you shall omit what God requires of you in that respect, either in your Families or in your Closets, both the words that have been spoken to you in the Congregation, full many a time, and this Publication also, will witness against you at the last day. And as for

## To the Second Church and Congregation

that Sacred Ordinance of the *Lords Supper*, there are some truly godly ones, that upon one pretence or other, wrong the Name of Christ, and their own Souls also, by living in the neglect of so great an Institution. And there are more that don't endeavour to prepare themselves for it. Yea, it is to be feared that amongst those that do come *unto*, there are many who eat and drink unworthily at the *Lords Table*. Partly for that they do not so clearly understand, the Nature, Meaning, and Proper Design of those Holy Mysteries, as ought to be. But chiefly for want of that *Habitual*, or ( if not so ) *Actual* preparation which is necessary when persons draw so near unto God, as in that solemn and sacred Ordinance, they do. So that insisting on such a Subject may not seem unprofitable, or unseasonable. I know that many worthy Ministers of Christ, have written thereon, as of late, Mr. *Doolittle*, Mr. *Burroughs*, Mr. *Fines*; and amongst them of the former Age Mr. *Dod*. Mr. *Hilderham*, Mr. *Rogers*, Mr. *Dyke*, have been famous, and done worthily in their Discourses about the *Lords Supper*, as well as in their other works which praise them in the Gates. And ( notwithstanding the accuracy attending the Sermons of some in these dayes ) I acknowledge my self to be an Admirer of the Solidity, and Spiritual Wisdome appearing in the Books of those that lived in the Age before us. But there are not many of you, that have the Treatises mentioned in your Hands or Houses. Or, if you have, it is not impossible but that the Lord may bless these Sermons also ( such as they are ) unto your Spiritual Edification. As for the other *Subjects* here discoursed on, they have been rarely ( some of them not at all, so far as I have understood ) handled by others in their Sermons; and yet I am mistaken, if there be not special cause to insist thereon in this place, and at this time.

I shall not in this *Epistle*, leave any words of more peculiar Advice with you, having done that already, in another

## at Boston in New England.

other *Dedications* to your selves, written ten years ago, when I did not think of living until this day. All that I have to add at present, is to encourage you in well-doing. And if I ( who, you will all say, have not been wont to flatter you ) take notice of some vertues, wherein the the Lord hath caused you to excel, and shine as lights unto others, I trust I shall therein, follow the holy Example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who doth not only reprove the failings, but take notice of the Graces in His Churches, before all the world. Let me then say, that there are several things wherein you have (through the Grace of Christ) been exemplary, and wherein the Lord hath owned you, unto mine, and other mens admiration. Let God in Christ Jesus alone have all the glory !

One thing wherein you have set a good Example, is, in that four years ago, you set apart a day for no other cause but only that so you might, by Fasting and Prayer, cry unto the Lord, for converting Grace to be poured down upon the souls of our poor Children. You were told for your encouragement (in the Sermon which was then Preached) that within the space of seven years before that near upon fourscore persons had presented themselves, and declared before the Church what ~~God~~ had done for their Souls. Let me now add, that since your agreement to keep that day of Fasting and Prayer, there have appeared upwards of seventy more ( the most of them of the Rising Generation ) who have publickly expressed the Experiences which they have had of the work of God upon them, in convincing them of their misery by nature, and in helping them to come unto Jesus Christ, and to close with him according to the terms of the Gospel. And besides all these, there is a considerable number of young persons, belonging to this Congregation, with whom I have had occasion, personally to treat, and concerning whom I am perswaded God hath begun

### *To the Second Church and Congregation*

begun a good work in them, and will finish it until the day of Christ. This is a great answer of Prayer! And many among your selves have been so much affected with it, as to importune me that there might be a Day set apart publickly to praise the Lord for the great things that he hath done for us, and for our Children. Some peculiar considerations, have made me less willing to comply with your desires in that matter. Nevertheless, I thought it my duty, in all humility, thus publickly to take notice of the Grace of God towards us, that so His Name may have the glory of it, both whilst I am alive, and after I am dead: And that your selves and others may be encouraged to pray; yea, to set dayes apart, to Fast and Pray, until the Spirit from on High be poured down upon the Souls of Children.

Another thing, wherein the Lord hath enabled you to set a good Example, is, in that you were (though not the first, yet) among the first, that did above two years ago, solemnly renew their Covenant, to walk with God as the Gospel requireth. And as you did then visibly, and unanimously own the Lord, so hath he since the same day, visibly owned you, more then formerly, not only in giving you to see some special answers of Prayer; But in that God hath since that time, within the compass of less then two years, added to your number above three-score Souls. O that God would help us ever to keep Covenant with him; that so he may not be provoked to do us hurt, and he hath done us good.

I must also mention one thing more, wherein you have been exemplary, and that is, your love, and respect to those who have been over you in the Lord. I many times think, there is not a Congregation in *New-England* more unhappy then your selves, in respect of a weak and sinful, and unworthy Teacher: Nor a Minister in

*New-*

**At Boston in New England.**

**New-England** more happy then my self, in reſpect of a loving, and obedient People.

I cannot forget how you faſted and prayed my life, when I was ſick thirteen years ago. And again, when I was brought near unto the Grave by bodily infirmities but two years paſt. If theſe *Sermons* ( which were all Preached ſince that ) or any other endeavours of mine, have been bleſſed for ſpiritual good to any of you, I hope you ſhall not repent of thoſe Prayers, either now or at the laſt day.

I may truly ſay that concerning you, which I know not whether any other Miniſter in the Land can ſay of his People ( tis poſſible ſome of them may ſay as much, though I am ſure all cannot ) viz. That I have not ( to my remembrance ) for theſe many years, made any propoſal to you, but the generality of you have readily ( except only in one thing ) hearkened unto me. The reaſon of which, hath not been, that I have been ſparing to put you upon things, which I believed would be pleaſing in the ſight of God; nor hath it been for any wiſdom that I have more then any living, and therefore it muſt needs proceed from that gracious inclination, wherewith the Lord hath endowed you.

Indeed, there is one thing, that I have often urged upon you, but could not obtain your conſent, and concurrence with me. I have often times deſired you to look after ſome ſettled and conſtant help for me, in the work of the Miniſtry, and have propoſed ſeveral to you for that end; but you did not ſee cauſe to comply with my Motion therein: but inſtead of that, you have ſet your eyes and hearts upon one, whom I, tis true, ( only from relative conſiderations ) was very backward to conſent unto his improvement, in the ſame Congregation with my ſelf: Yet have I no reaſon to find fault with you in this matter; but rather to thank you for your love,  
ſince

*To the Second Church and Congregation*

Since the person whom you have urgently, and unanimously desired is my Son, who hath laboured in the work of the Gospel among you these two years, I would pray you not to take it ill, that I have been so slow in concurring with your desires respecting such an one, considering that my averfeness (which many of you seemed to be troubled at) proceeded not from want of love to your selves, who have so many ways obliged me, that I cannot think my Son, or any thing that is mine, too good or too dear for you; and therefore upon the continued unanimity of your call, I have been passive therein. And I am really sensible of your affection manifested towards my self in the great love, and respect you have shewed to one so (no man in this world more) nearly related to me.

When I was, the last year, upon the doleful breach made on the *Colledge*, by the death of *New-Englands SAMUEL*, solicited to remove from you, in order to attending that which is indeed a *great Service* (but I cannot say, a greater then what God hath here advantaged me with, if I have an heart to improve my opportunities where I am) in another place, the sense of the kindnesses, I have received from you, hath made such an impression upon my Spirit, as that I never had the least inclination to leave you, without your own free consent thereunto.

If I knew how to requite your love, I would do it. I have no other way to manifest my longings after you all, but by Prayers day and night for you, and by writing as well as by publick Ministrations, and personal instructions (so far as time and strength will permit) to endeavour that I may promote the spiritual, and eternal welfare of you and yours. It has been my constant wish, that I might live and do good after I am dead. I

Trust



4 *at Boston in New-England.*

trust I shall by these *Sermons* (as well as others formerly published) be speaking to you after I am in my Grave; and to your Children also, yea, to the Children that are yet to be born.

The Lord grant that both Speaker and Hearers, Writer and Readers, may rejoyce together in the day of Christ, in that they have not laboured in vain! and whilest I am living with you, let not one Soul amongst you, that seareth God, forget or neglect one day or night, to pray for me in particular, Who am

Your loving (though unworthy)

Teacher:

*INCREASE MATHER.*

*Boston in New-England,*  
*19 day of 5. Month,*  
*(vulgo) July.*  
*1682.*

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*Advs.*





## Advertisement.

There is intended to be Published, a Collection of some Illustrious Providences, being expressive of many remarkable Events, which have hapned in *New-England*.

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### ERRATA.

Page 54. line 28. for of read in. p. 94. l. 9. r false Teachers. p. 112. l. 17. r Apostatizing p. 143. l. 25 for particularly r practically. p. 168 l. 22. for the r thus. p. 185. l. 2. r your being. p. 192. l. 14. for that r what. p. 203. l. 15. for that r the;

T L





## *The Godly Man is a Praising Man :*

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Psal. 32. 6.

*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto  
thee, in a time wherein thou mayest be  
found.*

**T**His Psalm is called *Maschil* of David.  
And it is the first Psalm which beareth  
that *Inscription*: possibly there  
was an *Holy Song*, used among the  
*Hebrews* of old, that did begin with that word  
*Maschil*, and was therefore known by that name,  
whose Metre was observed in composing and  
singing this Psalm. Likewise by that *Title*, the  
scope and main design of *David* therein seemeth  
to be intimated. For *Maschil* signifieth  
instruction

*instruction or understanding.* And that was *David's* design in this (as in the other *Psalms* which bear the same Title) to instruct men, and give them to understand some useful mysterious Truths, which were not obvious unto, or considered by every one. There are two Doctrines which the Prophet doth here instruct me in. One is concerning the Difference between Righteous and Wicked men, the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other. *ver. 10.* The other Doctrine is that which the Psalm begins with, *viz.* That they are blessed Men whose sins are forgiven, *ver. 1, 2.* And it is worthy our observation, that *David* having propounded this Doctrine, he doth explain, confirm, and apply it. 1. This Doctrine is explained by shewing who they are that have their sins forgiven, *viz.* They that make a sincere confession of them. *ver. 2.* *In whose spirit there is no guile.* *h. e.* one that is sincere and plain hearted in confessing his iniquity. If men hide and excuse sin, that is from guile and hypocrisy in the heart, so when they make a free and full confession of it before the Lord, and before men too, as God shall call them unto, that is a good evidence of sincerity, even of one in whose spirit there is no reigning guile. 2. This Doctrine is confirmed by Instancing and producing *David's* own Experience. He declareth that whilst he hid his sin, he was in a state most miserable, but when he was brought unto a free

free and full confession, God forgave him, ver:  
3, 4, 5. And elsewhere we read, that when he  
made an humble, penitent acknowledgement of  
his evils, the Prophet Nathan told him, that God  
had put away his sin, 2 Sam. 12, 13. 3. He maketh  
application of the Doctrine thus explained  
and confirmed, by an useful inference herefrom,  
in the 6. verse. The Use which he makes of it,  
is plainly this, That Men should be much in  
Prayer to God, and that every godly man will be  
so. For this (saith David) *h. e.* because of  
this: since it is so, that they are blessed whose  
sins are forgiven, and since it is so, that I upon a  
sincere confession of my sin, have found pardon-  
ing mercy with the Lord, every godly man will  
from my experience be encouraged to pray unto  
him.

In the Words before us, we have,

1. The Duty which should be done, *vis.*  
Prayer unto God.
2. The persons that will practise this Duty;  
*every one that is Godly.*
3. The time every man is concerned, to attend  
unto this Duty: *vis.* In a time wherein the Duty  
may be found.

There are especially two Doctrines which  
these words afford unto us,

**Doct. 1.** That to be much in Prayer unto God, is, as the duty of every Man, so the practice of every Godly Man.

**Doct. 2.** That Men ought not only to Pray unto God for Pardon and Salvation, but they should be sure to do this, in the same wherein He may be found.

**Doct. 1.** That to be much in Prayer unto God, is, as the Duty of every Man, so the practice of every Godly Man.

In order to the further prosecuting and clearing this Doctrine, there are three things to be enquired into. 1. What Prayer is? 2. Who are concerned in the performance of this Duty? 3. The Reasons why every Godly Man doth and will Pray?

**Q. 1.** What is Prayer? **Ans.** Prayer is a making known the desires of our hearts before God, in the Name of Jesus Christ, concerning things agreeable unto his will.

In this description of Prayer, there are four Particulars contained, which express the nature of it; and may be spoken unto under so many distinct Propositions.

**Prop. 1.** Prayer is a making known our hearts desire before the Lord, Rom. 10. 1. *My hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Prayer doth not consist so much in words



words & outward expressions (though those are also sometimes necessary) as in hearty desires, which the Lord alone is witness of, *Isai. 26. 8, 9.* In the way of thy Judgements O Lord have we waited for thee. [the desire of your soul] is towards thy Name, [with my Soul have I desired thee] in the night, yea, with my spirit will I seek thee early. The Lords people there, make solemn profession that they did continue praying to God, and were resolved that they would do so still, both day and night continually, notwithstanding all the judgements they had had experience of, they would not thereby be discouraged from praying and humble seeking to him. Hence Prayer is expressed by that of *lifting up the heart, Lam. 3. 41.* Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the Heavens. And tis called a pouring out of the heart, *Psal 62. 8.* Pour out your heart before him. And a lifting up of the soul unto God, *Psal. 25. 1.* and a pouring out of the soul before him, *1 Sam. 1. 15.* all which expressions, shew, that in true Prayer the heart and the affections thereof are deeply engaged. Words without the heart, may be esteemed Prayer by men, but not by the Lord, *Psal. 17. 1.* Therefore also, it is denoted by that of sighings and groanings, which are the work and motions of the heart, *Rom. 8. 26.* Moreover, it is the will of God, that Men should manifest the desires of their hearts before him, *Phil. 4. 6.* Let

*your requests be made known unto God.* The Lord expects that men should humbly declare before him what their desires are, by words and other signs that are expressive of the inward workings of the mind. Not but that God knoweth what Men would have before they express it; yea, what they will desire, long before any such motions arise in their hearts. *He understands their thoughts afar off*, that is to say, long before those thoughts come into their hearts, He knoweth that they will be there, *Psal. 139. 2.* Nevertheless the Lord will have Men to speak out their hearts to him, thereby to testify their humility and sincerity in his sight. And in this, the duty of Prayer differs from that of hearing the word. They are both of them moral Duties required by the same Commandment; only in hearing the Word, God maketh known his mind and will to us, but in Prayer we make known our minds and humble desires before him.

Prop. 2. *God is the only Object of Prayer.* This is intimated in the *Text*, since it is said, *unto thee, h. e. unto thee O Lord, and unto thee alone shall the godly man pray.* Daniel and the three *Martyrs* would rather expose themselves to the worst miseries, than the malice and rage of their enemies could bring upon them, then be guilty of such Idolatry, as to pray unto any other God besides the Lord. He is the only Object of all religious Service, *Psal. 76. 11. Bring presents to him*

## A Praying Man.

him that ought to be feared. When Men pray to God, then they fear him, and bring a present to him; and such presents are due to the Lord alone, *Mat. 4. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only thou shalt serve.* Prayer is a special part of that religious service which Men owe to God, therefore he on'y is to be prayed unto. Prayer is a spiritual Sacrifice, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* Now Sacrifice may not be offered unto any besides the on'y true God, *Exod. 22. 20.* Faith and Prayer are conjoynd as having the same object *Rom. 10. 14. How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* Men may believe in him, whom they may call upon or pray unto. They may trust in the object of Prayer, but God is the only object of Faith, *Jer. 17. 5. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.* Hence the Lord is stiled the Prayer-hearing God, *Psal. 65. 2. Thine* one of his glorious titles and incommunicable properties. He alone is able to hear the Prayers of all men. The bearer of Prayer, must needs be infinite and omnipresent. No finite being is able to hear millions praying to him at the same time, and these (some of them) ten thousand miles distant from one another. Nor can any one else answer Prayer. The chief things which we are to pray for, viz. Grace, the pardon of Sin, the eternal Salvation of our Souls, the Lord alone is able to bestow those blessings upon us. The Object of Prayer must needs be

omnipotent as well as omnipresent. Therefore  
 H. who the Name alone is Jehovah, is the only ob-  
 ject of Prayer.

Prop. 3. Prayer is to be presented before God,  
 in the alone Name of Jesus Christ. Man having  
 sinned, they must re- have to do with God, but  
 in and through the Mediator. As Joseph said un-  
 to his Brethren, Gen. 43. 3. You shall not see my  
 face, except your Brother be with you; so doeth the  
 Lord say unto sinners you shall not see my face  
 except you come in the Name of Jesus Christ.  
 Both prayers and praises, both petitions and  
 thanksgivings for mercy, are to be offered unto  
 God in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. Heb.  
 13. 15. Heb. 14. 13. 14. For it is through him,  
 that we find any acceptance with the holy and  
 glorious God. If our persons are accepted, or if  
 our prayers and services are so, it is upon Christs  
 account, Eph. 1. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Now there are se-  
 verall things implied in praying, through the  
 Name of Christ.

1. That in Prayer we are to look immediatly  
 upon Christ, and so unto God, Rev. 8. 4. The  
 smoke of the Incense which came with the prayers of  
 Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angels  
 hands. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Angel of  
 the everlasting Covenant; we are to put our  
 prayers into his hands, that so they may become  
 as incense before the Lord. Of old, if a man  
 had a Sacrifice to offer, he might not bring it in  
 God

## A Praying Man

God immediately, but by the Priests *Lev. 17. 11*. Thus must we come unto God by Jesus Christ, bringing our Spiritual Sacrifices unto him, that he may present them to the Father. *Heb. 7. 25*. Christ the Mediator, is the near object of divine Worship, God the ultimate object thereof.

2. When in Prayer, we ask Blessing upon the merit and mediation of the Lord Jesus, it is as we pray in his Name. The Lords Servants of old, were to pray, looking towards the Temple or Tabernacle, *1 King. 8. 47, 48. Psal. 138. 2. Joh. 2. 4.* because that was a type of Christ; so that by looking thercupon, they testified their hopes of acceptance through his merit and mediation. We must bear wholly upon Christs Interest, for access and success before the throne of Grace, *Eph. 3. 12.*

3. In these dayes of the *New Testament*, praying in Christs Name, implieth a seeking for mercy on account of the satisfaction which Christ hath already made unto divine Justice. Christ told his Disciples they had as yet asked nothing in his Name, *Joh. 16. 24.* that is to say on the account of his death and satisfaction thereby made unto divine Justice. For the Saints of God, alwayes expected answers of Prayer on Christs account, and so prayed in his Name before he came into the world. The Prophet *Daniel* prayed that God would hear him for the Lords sake, *Dan. 9. 17.* But in the times of the *Old Testa-*

ment

*present* mercy was prayed and hoped for, because of that which Christ should do hereafter, whenas in the times of the Gospel we pray for audience on the account of what Christ hath already done. This is implied in praying in his Name.

And thus to do is essential unto prayer: yea, thus doth every one that is godly pray. As for *Pagans* that pray unto God without any Mediator; and *Papists* that pray unto him through other Mediators besides Christ; that make Saints and Angels their Mediators, thereby turning Christ out of his office, so far as is in in them to do; their prayers are as no prayers: yea when they offer Incense it is an abomination to the Lord.

Prop. 4. *As for the matter of prayer, it is to be for things agreeable to the Will of God.* 1 Joh. 5. 14. The holy Incense appointed under the Law, (which signified Prayer, *Mal.* 1. 11) was to be made exactly according to divine prescription, *Exod.* 30. 34, 35. so must prayer be as to the matter of it. Whatever is promised in the covenant of grace, is fit matter for prayer: even temporal blessings, so far as the Lord hath promised to bestow them, but especially spiritual and eternal blessings, (they being the chief things spoken of in the Covenant) are to be prayed for. And above all, we are to pray that God may have glory, and that the Kingdom and Interest

interest of the Lord Jesus Christ may be advanced. All this we see in that *Rule or Platform of Prayer*, (commonly called the *Lords Prayer*) which the Lord Christ hath given to his Disciples for their direction and imitation. To present unlawful desires before God, is a great transgression of the Rule of prayer. It is to offer a dead polluted thing upon the Lords *Altar*: yet we find that sometimes godly men have offended this way. So did the Sons of *Zebedee*, when imagining that Christ would have a pompous temporal dominion, they prayed for great enjoyments in the world. What warrant had they from any word of God, to come before the Lord with such a request as that was? so when persons under deep affliction do out of the impatience of their Spirits, pray and wish for Death, that an unlawful desire: thus did godly *Job*, sometimes miss it in his prayers, *Chap. 6, 7, 8.* O (saith he) that I might have my request! and that God would grant me this thing that I long for, even that it would please God to destroy me, that he would let loose his hand and cut me off. So *Jonah*, he was afraid that some would look upon him as a false Prophet; and rather then undergo a little disgrace from men; in a sullen pang of discontent, he beseecheth God to take away his life from him, *Chap. 4. 3.* God delights not in such requests as these are. They are not as *Incense* before him.

Thus

Thus have we done with the first thing propounded to be spoken unto, namely, what prayer is!

We came to the second enquiry, *viz. Who are concerned in the performance of this duty?*

*Ans.* To pray unto the Lord is every mans duty: though to pray aright, is only the godly mans practice, yet it is that which all men are bound unto, as appears:

1. In that Prayer is a part of Natural, Moral Worship. There are two sorts of Worship due to God, *viz.* Natural and Instituted worship. As for Instituted worship, it depends wholly upon the will of God, and therefore only some men, and in some ages are obliged to attend thereto, according as God shall please to reveal of his will unto them. Natural worship is that which if a man doth understand any thing concerning the nature of the blessed and glorious God, he cannot but know that such worship is due unto him. Hence all men, and that in all ages are concerned therein. And of this sort is prayer: hence not only Men but holy Angels pray unto the Lord. Yea the Saints in glory pray, and will do so, for ever. They praise God, & that is one sort of prayer, *Rev. 5. 11, 12.*

2. Prayer is a duty required in the first Commandment: although the publick stated dispensation of the duty is enjoined in the second Commandment, nevertheless, when in the first Commandment it is said, *thou shalt have the Lord to be*



thy God, part of the meaning is, thou shalt worship him, and pray to him. As all men are bound by virtue of that Commandment to love the Lord, and to fear him, so are they no less bound to pray unto him: that being one way whereby they express both their love unto, and their fear of his great Name.

3. If we consider the several sorts of men that are in the World, we shall see that Prayer is every mans duty. All men are divided into these two sorts, godly and ungodly; regenerate and unregenerate. Both these ought to pray unto the Lord. As for godly men, the Text speaks expressly. And the Lord Jesus Christ taught his Disciples both that they ought, and how they ought to pray. And as for unregenerate men, they are not exempted from their obligation unto this duty, though they be unable to perform it aright. The unconverted are bound to pray that converting grace may be given to them. Christ tells the Woman of Samaria, that she should ask for living water. *Joh. 4. 10.* Those that have not as yet a new heart, are bid to pray that the Lord would bestow it on them, *Ezek. 36. 37.* such as never yet found God, but are out of his favor, are commanded to seek his face and favour, *1st. 55. 6, 7.* The whole Nation of the *7ews*, (wherein were few godly men comparatively) are commanded to pray in the most solemn manner, *Zeph. 2. 1.* *Thi-*

*a 2nd  
ed. 10. 15  
1 Sam.  
15. 30*

men *Magnus* when in the gall of bitterness, and under the bond of iniquity, was by the Apostle called upon to pray for the pardon of his sins, *Act* 8.22. Are not ungodly men bound to repent? Where the Gospel is Preached, they are so, *Act* 17.30. And therefore to pray: For confession of Sin, and begging for mercy, is one thing in Repentance and in Prayer. And the Lord out of his infinite goodness, doth sometimes so far hear unregenerate men praying and crying unto him, as to deliver them from temporal judgements, thereby to encourage them to seek unto him for greater mercies: as we see in *Rehoboam*, in *Ahab*, and in the *Ninivites*. If prayer were not their duty, the Lord would not so far manifest respect to them, as to bestow a temporal Reward, or remove temporal judgements from them upon their praying to him. It is objected by some, that the prayers of the wicked, are an abomination, and how then is prayer their duty? ought they to do that which is an abomination? *Ans.* It is indeed most true, that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. All the actions of ungodly men are abominable in the Lords sight, as proceeding from them, who are his enemies, *Hag.* 2. 14. but will any man therefore say, that such men must be altogether idle, and attend no duty, neither of their general, nor of their particular callings. The plowing of the wicked is sin. Must he now abuse

buse the Scripture, and say that his plough shall stand still: his reading the Scriptures, or hearing the Word preached to him, is as much an abomination in the Lords sight, as his praying. But without Faith it is impossible to please God. Must he then neither read nor hear the Word? God forbid that Men should so wrest the Scripture unto their own destruction. The reason why the prayers of an ungodly man are an abomination, is not because prayer is not his duty, but because he doth not so perform that his duty as he should do.

We come now unto the third thing proposed to be enquired into, *viz.* the Reasons why every godly man doth and will pray.

Reas. 1. *Because godly men have the spirit of God,* 1 Joh. 3. 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us.* Every true Believer hath received the spirit: Rom. 8. 9. *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* The Soul of a godly man is become the everlasting habitation of the spirit of God. When the holy Spirit, when he dwells in the heart, doth incline unto prayer, he causeth the grace, the habit of prayer to be in the Soul. Hence is that expression in the Scripture, of a *spiritual prayer*, Zech. 12. 10. when a man hath an habitation and inclination unto prayer, wrought in his heart by the holy Spirit of God: then hath he the grace of prayer. And the holy Spirit doth continually

one is godly to pray. He helps them with matter, and helpeth them by stirring up affections, and fervency therein: *Rom. 8. 26. Likewise the Spirit helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit it self maketh intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered.*

**Real. 2. Every godly man is sensible of his wants and miseries.** They that feel their wants will cry for relief: so do all that are godly. Therefore are they called *the Humble*, *Psal. 10. 17.* The humble man is sensible of his own emptiness and nothingness, and that he needs continual supplies of Grace from God by Jesus Christ. The more grace every man hath, the more doth he feel his want of grace, and that sets him a praying for it. He that hath the grace of knowledge is sensible of his ignorance, and therefore prays for more wisdom, *1am. 1. 5.* He that hath the grace of Faith is sensible of his unbelief, and therefore prayeth against it: *Mar. 9. 24.* The Apostles having faith, were sensible that they stood in need of more, and of much Faith, and that made them pray, *Lord, increase our Faith, Luk. 17. 5.* he that hath the grace of Repentance, is sensible of the hardness of his own heart, and therefore prayeth against it, *Isai, 63. 17.*

**Real 3. Every Godly man hath Faith.** The Godly man, and the true Believer on Christ are the same. Now by his Faith, he doth see and

comprehend these things which set him a praying. He seeth that God which doth encourage him to pray unto him. By Faith he seeth that the Lord is able to supply all the necessities of his poor creatures, and to help them whatever their distresses may be, 2 Chron. 20. 12. Also by his Faith he seeth that God is willing as well as able to save those that seek unto him. That he is a God full of mercy, ready to forgive those that unfeignedly repent of their sins, and that's a marvellous encouragement unto Prayer, as is in the Context intimated. I confessed my sin (saith David) and then the Lord forgave mine iniquity; and therefore every godly man that shall hear of this, will be encouraged to pray unto so gracious a God. He that doth not believe will not pray, Rom. 10. 14. But he that doth believe will pray, Psal. 116 10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken.* He believed that God would save him, and that caused him to speak and pour out his heart in Prayer before the Lord.

Reas. 4. Every godly man doth love the Lord, 1 am. 2. 5. Hence he delights in communion with him. A man will be free to unbolome himself, and to open his heart unto a dear and faithful friend, whom he loveth and delights in. Thus the Saints of God love him dearly, and therefore they cannot live without Prayer unto him, if they be kept from communion with God in that way, though but for a few hours, they think that is too long

long until they can have an opportunity of holy converse with him again. *David* loved the Lord; therefore would he call upon him as long as he had a day to live, *Psal.* 116. 1, 2.

*Use 1. For Conviction and Awakening unto prayerless Sinners.* O that there were not many such. But alas! that which was most injuriously charged upon *Job*, when *Eliphaz* said to him, *thou restr. iust prayer before God*, may be truly and sadly charged upon many poor creatures. Are there not some, that are grown unto men and womens estates, that hardly ever prayed in their lives? how lamentable is their condition! Now that such may be convinced of their sin and misery, lay to heart a few Considerations.

1. Thou that art prayerless, art amongst the Ungodly. For my Text saith, *That covers one that is godly will pray*; they then that live without Prayer, are ungodly ones. There is not a spark of Grace in thy soul. Nay, thou art not so much as in the way, thou hast not taken the first step towards Conversion. For, when the Lord cometh to convert a Soul, one of the first things is, He sets him a Praying; as we see in *Paul*, whilst he was in the pangs of the new-birth, it was said concerning him, *Behold he prayeth*, *Act.* 9. 11. As for thee a sinful wretch, behold thou prayest not. The Lord looketh down from heaven upon thee, from day to day, behold he seeth thee sinning,

ning, but doth not see thee praying? then thou art far from any Conversion? Thou art amongst the number of the ungodly; and what a case then is thy soul in? and what wilt thou coit the Judgement that is to come? *Psal. 1. 5. The ungodly shall not stand in the Judgement, nor sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous.*

2. Thou art guilty of *Atheisme*. Prayerless Creatures are no better then *Atheists*. At leastwise thou art a practical *Atheist*. Thou livest as if thou hadst no Soul to save; and as if there were no God to serve. If thou believest indeed that there is a God, then why dost thou not pray unto him? *Psal. 10. 4. The wicked will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.* All his thoughts, all his wishes are, O that there were no God. There is not a prayerless creature in the World, but he wisheth there were no God. And he saith plainly and practically; the Lord shall not be his God. By living in the neglect of Prayer, t'ou hast rejected the Lord, and said, He shall be no God over thee. And wilt thou persist in this neglect? Then hear thy Doom and tremble at it, *Psal. 9. 17. The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* They that forget Prayer, forget God, and therefore being amongst the wicked, they must be turned down into Hell.

3. There is not the least hope of thy Salvation; as long as thou continuest thus in a careless neglect

of God, and of thy own Soul. It is very true, that men may practise the duty of Prayer after a sort, and for all that not be saved. The Pharisees would pray after a formal manner; yet Christ said to his Disciples, *Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heavens.* Mat. 5. 20. But it is no less true, that if men do not pray, they shall not be saved. Can the workers of Iniquity be saved? will not the Lord Jesus say unto all such at the last day, *Depart from me.* Now the Scripture saith, *The workers of iniquity call not upon the Lord,* Psal.

34. 4. *You will be most inexcusable before the Lord. For you cannot plead ignorance, you cannot say, Lord, I was never told that it was my duty to pray. Will not the Minister of God that hath been speaking in his Name, stand forth and witness against you at the last day, that you have been called upon, and earnestly told of your duty, full many a time yea, and do you not go with convinced Consciences, that you ought to pray unto the Lord? And yet will you not do it? what will you say for your selves? or, how will you be able to stand in the day of the Lords pleading with you?*

Use 2<sup>d</sup>. *Of Exhortation unto all, but especially unto those that are godly, to be much in the practice of*



of this duty of Prayer unto God. In the prosecution of this Use, we shall 1. Lay down some Motives to perswade: 2. Mention some Rules to direct in the due performance of this duty.

**For Motives:** Consider 1. That every man's Religion is according unto what his Prayers are. Godliness implieth Religion: 1 Tim. 3. 16. Great is the Mystery of godliness, i.e. of Religion. Where there is no Prayer, there is no true Religion. They are Heathen People that do not call upon the true God, Psalm 79. 6. Prayerless men are not worthy of the name of Christians; 2 Pet. 3. 14. 1 Cor. 1. 2. They that are only formal in Prayer, are no better then Formalists in Religion, as the Jews were, who would draw nigh unto God with their lips when their hearts were far from him; Mat. 23. 8. 2 Tim. 3. 5. And the truly Religious are a generation of sincere seekers of the face of God, Psalm 24. 6. Hence the work of Conversion is in the Scripture expressed by that of men beginning to pray in good earnest; Job. 12. 17. Eccl. 5. 2. 1. 22. And they that are eminent in godliness will be much in Prayer, as we see in Jacob, David, Daniel, Paul, all of them men that had much grace, & they were abundant in Prayer unto God.

Consider 2. How necessary a duty Prayer is. There is nothing more inculcated in the Scripture then this great duty. It is a greater Duty then many others, which yet may not be omitted. Hence the Apostle speaks, as 1 Tim. 2. 1. Exhort

but that [first of all] *Supplications, Prayers, &c. be made.* q. d. above other things I commend this duty to you. The Apostle seemeth to give the preference to Prayer. Yea it is an indispensable duty; such a duty as that though men should forbid us the practice of it, and that upon the severest penalties; it ought nevertheless to be attended. Therefore the Prophet *Daniel* chose rather to endanger his life, then to neglect his duty towards God in this respect, *Dan. 6. 10.* And it is necessary as a means for the obtaining of good. Saving good and mercy is not to be expected but in a way of Prayer, *Rom. 10. 13.* *For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.* If men would have Salvation, they must pray for it. If they would have pardoning mercy they must pray for it. Therefore *Peter* said to *Simon Magus*, *Pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven, Act. 8. 22.* All promised mercies come to the Lords people upon their praying to him. God delights to bestow his Blessings in that way. He hath engaged in his holy and gracious Covenant to give Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Blessings; but that notwithstanding, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them, Ezek. 36. 37. 38.* Prayer is necessary in order to a sanctified enjoyment of temporal blessings, *1 Tim. 4. 4, 5.* Every creature of God is good; and nothing to be refused

refused if it be received with thanks-giving, for it is sanctified by the word and Prayer. Food, Raiment, Health, whatever temporal mercies we may think of, are not sanctified unto any that enjoy them, except they be received with thanks-giving and Prayer. We therefore read in the Gospel that our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was upon Earth, would not suffer men to eat a Meals meat without praying over it, or desiring a blessing from God upon it, *Mat. 14. 19, 20.*

Consider 3. *That to pray unto God is our privilege as well as our duty.* It is our honour and our happiness, that we may do so. For when we pray, we come into the Lords presence; and thats an high favour to be admitted into the gracious presence of the Majesty of Heaven.

We then approach into his Courts, *Psal. 96. 8.* In Prayer, there is a drawing nigh unto God: god-ly men come nigh unto God, i.e. pray unto him, before the blood cometh unto them; as the Psalmist here speaketh. And it is our happiness that we may do so, *Psal. 73. 28.* *It is good for me to draw nigh to God.* It is not only in it self good, but its good for me, saith David; much for my benefit that I may have access unto his glorious Majesty. In Prayer, we have communion with God. Yea, godly men have sometimes intimacy of communion with God, and with Jesus Christ, in that duty of Prayer. Now thats a great privilege; a singular honour and favour. The

praying Believer may say with the Spouse, *Cant.*  
*2.4. The King hath brought me into his chambers.*  
 What a gracious favour is it, that the King of  
 Heaven should admit us into his presence Cham-  
 ber, and there let us converse and be humbly fa-  
 miliar with him. Prayer is an Heavenly work,  
*Lam. 3.41. Lift up our hearts with our hands*  
*unto God in the Heavens.* By that especially there  
 is a blessed course maintained between Hea-  
 ven and Earth, God and Men. Is it not an hap-  
 py thing to drive a Trade for Heaven? so do  
 praying Saints do every day. Nay, it is part of  
 the work of Heaven. The Saints and Angels  
 there, are alwayes praying, i. e. alwayes praising  
 God. The Host of Heaven doth worship him,  
*Neh. 9.6. The multitude of the Heavenly Host are*  
*praising God, saying, Glory to God in the highest,*  
*Luk. 2.13, 14.* Is it not our honour and happi-  
 ness, that whilst on Earth, we may be imployed  
 in the same work with the Angels of Heaven, and  
 Saints in glory? Moreover, hereby God is glo-  
 rified, when his Servants and Suppliants come  
 and present humble petitions before the Lord  
 that sits upon a Throne of Grace ready to re-  
 ceive them, they give unto him the glory that is  
 due unto his Name, *Psal. 29. 1, 2.* Now we are  
 not capable of greater happiness than this is,  
 actively to honour God or to be made use of as  
 instruments of glory unto his Name.

Consider 4. That men (especially they that are  
godly) have great encouragement to be diligent  
to be much in the practice of this great duty.  
There is great reason for them to hope that they  
shall not lose their labour. He hath not said to  
the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. Many  
things might be mentioned here, the considera-  
tion whereof is a marvellous encouragement and  
inducement unto prayer : e. g. The gracious na-  
ture of the blessed God. When poor Creatures  
cry unto him, he will hear; for he is gracious.  
He is infinitely gracious, and thence ready to  
forgive those that have been the greatest rebels  
against him, if they confess their iniquity, and  
humbly pray & seek unto him for mercy. Ben-  
hadad's servants were encouraged in their supplica-  
tion, because they had heard, that the King of Is-  
rael were merciful Kings. We know that the God  
and King of Heaven is a merciful God, and shall  
we not then pray unto him? He is a sin-par-  
doning God, and that consideration should move  
us unto Prayer. It is the very motive which the  
Psalmist in this Context maketh use of, to excite  
every one that is godly to pray. So in Psal. 86.  
40. *Unto thee O Lord do I lift up my Soul, for  
thou art ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy un-  
to all them that call upon thee, give ear O Lord un-  
to my Prayer.* As for the Apostate Angels, they  
do not pray unto God, because he never pro-  
claimed his mercy to them, they have no hopes

of a pardon if they should pray for it, never so earnestly; but it is otherwise with the Children of men. The Lord from Heaven declareth unto them, that though their sins have been never so many, and never so great, if they do in a way of Repentance seek unto him, he will abundantly pardon them. *Isai. 55. 6, 7.*

Again, that consideration of a Mediator for sinners; (that the Son of God is become their Mediator) is a glorious encouragement unto Prayer. To this purpose doth the Apostle speak *1 Tim. 2. 1. with ver. 5. Let prayers be made for all men, for there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.* There is a Mediator (saith he) for all sorts of men, and therefore pray for all sorts of men. And this consideration is elsewhere improved by the same Apostle as an encouragement unto prayer. In *Heb. 4. 14. Seeing, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God;* it is added in ver. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of grace.* Since we have such an one as the Son of God to be our Mediator in Heaven, therefore let us with humble boldness ply the Throne of grace continually. Christ the Mediator hath satisfied divine justice for the sins of Believers: And he doth intercede with God for them, that their Souls may be saved, and their Prayers heard. While the Priest executing his Office did burn Incense, being carried into the Temple of

of the Lord, the people were praying without,  
*Luk. 1. 9, 10.* Thus while Believers are praying  
 on Earth, Christ is interceding in Heaven for  
 them. Moreover, as for godly men, they are  
 the Favourites of Heaven, therefore they should  
 be much in Prayer. *The Lords ear is open to  
 their cry, Psal 34. 15.* even as the ears of a Prince  
 are open to the requests of his special Favourites,  
 The godly man hath the King of Heavens ear, he  
 is willing to hear the Petitions of such as those  
 are. He takes singular delight in hearing them  
 pray to him. *The prayer of the upright is his de-  
 light, Prov. 15. 8.* A broken hearted prayer is  
 Musick in the Lords ears. Yea, it e'en ravisheth  
 his heart, when the penitent Believer doth pour  
 out the prayer of Faith before him. What  
 wonderful expressions are in the *Canticles* to this  
 purpose? *Chap. 2. 14. Let me see thy countenance,  
 let me hear thy voice for sweet is thy voice, and a-  
 gain Chap. 4. ver. 9. Thou hast ravished my heart  
 with one of thine eyes.* The voice of Prayer, if  
 there be an eye of Faith looking up to God in  
 Jesus Christ, how sweet, how ravishing is it to  
 the Lords heart?

There are also precious and glorious promises  
 belonging to such; which should encourage us  
 to Prayer. The Lord hath promised, that if  
 they ask they shall receive. Yea, though they  
 beg for the greatest favours they shall obtain  
 them: if they open their mouths wide, he will

fulfillment. What a sweet promise is that, *Job: 15. 22, 24.* Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you, ask and ye shall receive: that your joy may be full.

Could. 5. The Lords Servants, have ever found him to be a Prayer-hearing God. *Psal. 65. 2.* O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. All flesh, Believers, in all ages have experienced the truth of this. Unto which of the Saints can you turn you, but they will every one say, this is truth, my Soul knoweth it right well. God hath been as ready to hear as they have been to pray for mercy. Thus, *Daniel* found it, that whiles he was speaking and praying, and presenting his Supplication before the Lord his God; an Angel was sent from Heaven, who informed him, that from the beginning of his supplication, he was accepted. *Chap 9. 20. 23.* Yea, the Lord is more ready to give, then his Children are to ask; and therefore doth many times, bestow those blessings upon them, which they intend to pray for, before they have an opportunity actually to seek his face, *Isai. 65. 24.* Before they call I will answer, and whilst they are yet speaking I will hear. We read much concerning this in the Scripture; how God hath had respect to the Prayers of his People. And humane as well as divine Story abounds with instances to this purpose, as I have elsewhere noted. And may not we our selves set our Seals to this truth? where



where is the godly man, but may do so? May we not say after Jacob, Gen. 35. 3. God answered me in the day of my distress? and after David, 1 Sam. 22. 7. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God, and he did hear my voice out of his Temple, & my cry did enter into his Ears. And as for those publick solemn Prayers which have been poured out before the Lord, have not our eyes seen, that it hath not been in vain. In times of Drought, we have sought the Lord; and he hath sometimes sent a plentiful Rain, on the very day when his People were earnestly praying before him for that mercy. In the late War with the Heathen amongst whom we live, what great things hath the Lord done for us, in answer to Prayer? That mortal Contagion wherewith so many Families were afflicted but two years ago, Prayer hath prevailed with the Lord to remove it, and to heal this Land. Let us then resolve with David; (surely every godly praying soul hath cause to say, as he did,) Psa. 116. 1, 2. I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my supplications, because he hath inclined his ear unto me; therefore will I call upon him as long as I shall live.

Wherefore, Consider 6. The great things that may be done by Prayer. This is the way for a man to be and to do, as Saul said of David, 1 Sam. 26. 25. Thou shalt both do great things; and shalt also still prevail. How came it to pass, that David

did great things; and that he did still pre-  
 vail? the reason of it was his being a man that  
 was much in Prayer. He gave himself to prayer,  
 Psal. 109. 4. This is certainly the best way  
 for a man to prosper in his undertakings, ever  
 follow them with constant and fervent Prayer.  
 It is reported concerning Dr. *Preston*, that when  
 some said, he was esteemed a great *Politician* be-  
 cause he usually carried on the designs he took in  
 hand with good success: his Reply was, That  
 is not the reason of my matters succeeding well,  
 but I work by an Engine, which the world thinks  
 not of, i. e. by Prayer. When I undertake a  
 business, I follow it with earnest Prayer to God,  
 and he maketh it to become successful. And in-  
 deed Prayer is a marvellous Engine. Godly  
 men may hereby bring about strange changes in  
 the World. Yea, they may undermine (as Da-  
 vid did by one Prayer) the deep and hellish coun-  
 sels of *Achitophels*. Nay, they may e'en do and  
 have what they will, that is not contrary to the  
 will of God. One said of *Luther*, *Iste vir po-  
 tuit quodcumque voluit*, That man could by his  
 Prayers obtain from God any thing that he de-  
 sired. It is a wonderful expression, which we  
 find, *Rev. 11. 6.* where it's said concerning the two  
 Prophets, *They can smite the Earth with all  
 Plagues as often as they will.* And how do they  
 smite the Earth, but by sending Prayer to Hea-  
 ven? And what mercy can there be thought of,

but

but the godly man, may by prayer obtain it? he may in that way procure mercies (spiritual as well as temporal) for his own soul. Yea, and mercy for his Family; grace and everlasting salvation for his Children. An holy man once, after intimate communion with God in secret prayer, could say to a familiar friend of his; *I have this day obtained mercy of God for my self and for all mine.* And as for those, that give themselves unto prayer, God useth to bless them much in their Children. They and their offspring with them are known to be the blessed of the Lord. Yea more; godly men may by prayer obtain mercy for the Land wherein they live. A whole Town and Country fareth the better for the sake of a few praying ones, that are therein, who day and night are plying the Throne of Grace. The innocent by lifting up pure hands of prayer delivers the Island, as *Eliphaz* speaks, *Job. 22. 32.* Yea, sometimes, a whole Countrey fareth the better for one wrestler with God, as all the land of *Israel* did, for the prayers of one *Elijah*, though he was a man subject to like passions as we are, *1am. 5. 17, 18.* Yea, and a few godly men, may by their prayers procure and hasten judgement, upon those that are the subjects of Imprecation, that is to say, upon the implacable enemies of God, and of his Servants. We may see for this that Scripture, *Rev. 16. 1, I heard a great voice out of the Temple, saying, to the*  
*scorn*

from Angels, so great might, and power, as to visit  
 of the wrath of God upon the earth. Where the  
 Temple was the place of prayer. So is prayer  
 that power, and confounding visit of vengeance  
 upon the Antichristian generations. Who would  
 this man who exerts he; that shall have many  
 prayers of Gods servants engaged against him.  
 Heel you, say the Lord tell you, that though  
 God may seem to forbear him long, vengeance  
 shall come upon him speedily. And the true  
 reason of all this which hath been spoken, is, be-  
 cause the omnipotent God himself is overcome  
 by prayer? And then what cannot godly pray-  
 ing ones do, if omnipotency himself be overcome  
 by them? Thus do we read concerning Jacob,  
 that by his strength he had power with God; yea,  
 when he wept and made supplication to him, he had  
 power over the Angel, and prevailed, in. 22. over  
 the increased Angel of the everlasting Covenant,  
 the Eternal Son of God; that Angel, who is the  
 Lord of Hosts, the Lord in his memorial Hos. 12.  
 3, 4, 5. In a word, prayer doth as it were hold  
 the Lords hands, when he is ready to strike his  
 people, who have by their sins provoked him.  
 Therefore the Lord saide to Moses *Let me alone*  
*that I may consume them,* Exod. 32. 10. A miraci-  
 lous expression! it is as if the Lord had said, I  
 would fain be at this people, and strike them a  
 blow that should kill them suddenly, because  
 they have suddenly departed from me, but thou

Moses

*Moses* by thy Prayers dost hold my hands; that I cannot tell how to smite them, until thou art silent; - therefore *let me alone.* And

Prayer doth as it were jogg his Almighty Arm, and cause him to awake unto Judgement against the Adversaries of his people, when before prayers and cries went up to Heaven, the Lord seemed as if he were asleep or unconcerned with the sorrows and distresses of his Servants. Hence is that, *Isai. 51. 9. Awake, awake, put on strength O arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient dayes, in the generations of old.* The cry of prayer, especially when many of his Servants, do at the same time, and with the same heart cry unto him; it awakens the Lord, so that he stirreth up himself, and his glorious Arm doth great things in answer unto those prayers and cries.

Consider, 7. *The present times.* The day we live in, is such as calleth upon every one that is godly to pray. Never more need of prayer then at this time. I may say this day, as one of the Martyrs said, when he was going to die. *Pray, pray, pray, never more need then now.* Clouds and Thunders, Storms and Tempests, are ready to crack and break upon a sinful and miserable world; and will you not pray? Shall we be worse then the old ungodly world? When they saw that the flood was indeed a coming did they not pray think you? Behold! we may see it at this day. *The floods of great waters, are coming*

and hastening upon the world: yea, upon this generation; and shall we not pray? did not they cry *An Ark an Ark*! that we perish not in the flood, and will not thou then cry, a *Christ*, & *Christ* I refuse my poor soul, that I perish not in the deep and dark waters of infinite wrath. Other considerations have been mentioned to quicken and encourage the godly, but this should move the ungodly unto prayer also.

*Quickly what shall be done that so the Lord may accept of us, if we pray not?*

*Answer.* If a man would have his prayers find audience and acceptance in Heaven, then he must *keep his state*. God doth not respect the prayer, and then the person, but first the person and then the prayer. He that is not in his state a true Believer, and so in Christ, his prayers are unacceptable before the Lord. Why? *because* offering and acceptance with the Lord, rather than *Calves*? It was because *Abel* brought a sacrifice, but *Cain* had none; and without that, it is impossible to please God. *Heb. 11. 4.* If a man be as to his spiritual life a truly good man, then God will hear his prayer, as my Text doth intimate. If he be *humble*, then he may be sure that God will respect his prayer; *Heb. 11. 5.* *Abel* brought a sacrifice with a good heart, for *faith* is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If there be a true, i. e. a sincere heart in the sight of God, a man may draw near to him in prayer, with the assurance of Faith for gracious accep-

since God heareth not sinners: but sincere worshippers, and such as do his will, whom he heareth, Job. v. 1. If there be no sin which a man doth love or live in, then his Prayers are pleasing and precious before the Lord, otherwise they are not so: therefore David speaketh so in Psalm 66. 10. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*

2. He that would have his prayers acceptable, must look to his walking. He must be careful to walk closely with God; and take heed of offending him by giving way to sin, lest the Lord turn a deaf ear upon all his prayers. After that Saul had sinned, and departed from God, his enquiries after the Lord were not regarded, 1 Sam. 28. 6. *When I was enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not.* And not only a Soul, but one that is to his state a godly man, may by his loose and careless walking, provoke the Lord to frown upon his prayers. Hence the Church complaineth that as a just fruit of their transgressing against the Lord, *He had covered himself with a cloud, that their prayer should not pass through.* Job. 34. 37. God clouds his face from his own Children; that they see no answer to their prayers: and many times some Sin or other which they have been guilty of, is the cause of it. Wherefore, if at any time through temptation, a godly man shall fall into a sin, so as to break his peace with God, let him be sure to renew his re-

penitance, and let not iniquity be found with him; so will the Lord hear his prayer. *If iniquity be in thine hand put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy Tabernacle.* If thou hast committed any sin thy self, or if there be any evil in thy Family, repent of it; and reform what is amiss, then will God hear thy prayer. *Job 11. 13, 14.* If thou shalt repent of former backslidings, and endeavour to walk in all well pleasing before the Lord for the time to come, *Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am, at hand ready to help thee, Isa. 58. 9.*

3. Let us look to the manner as well as to the matter of our prayers. He that would find acceptance with God, must look well to the frame of his heart in prayer. Let him on the one hand, have a care, that he doth not offer strange fire before the Lord, *1 Tim. 2. 8.* *I will that Men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath.* And yet let him not on the other hand give way to deadness and formality in prayer. To be fervent in Prayer is the way to prevail. If we put fire to the incense of Prayer, it will find acceptance in Heaven. *Psalm 5. 16.* *The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Eliph prayed earnestly, and God heard him. O then let us wrestle in Prayer. *Then are we the seed of Jacob; and shall not seek the Lord face in vain.*



4. If a man would have the Lord hear his Prayer, then let him persevere therein. Eph. 6. 18. *Praying always watching & fervent, with all perseverance.* Alas ! if men have prayed once or twice, or a few times, and no answer cometh, they are apt to be discouraged, and to think that they shall never be heard : but say not so. It may be God delays to answer thy prayer at present, because he delights to hear thee praying, or that so he may try thy Faith and Patience. Remember the Woman of Canaan, the Lord seemed not to regard her prayers for a while ; that he might see whether she would be put off with a denial ; but when she continued praying still ; a blessed answer came at last. Who knoweth, but that it may be so with thee ? if God put it into thy heart to resolve that thou wilt never leave praying for such a mercy, until thou hast obtained, that's a sign that he intends to bestow that mercy on thee at last.

5. *Proposition.* As the Psalmist here speaketh, let every one pray unto the Lord, in a time wherein he may be found.

Men cannot pray too soon, but they may pray when it is too late. And O that prayerless creatures would think sadly of that. The sooner you come to God, the sooner and the better are you like to speed. If thou wouldst seek unto God *hither*, and make thy supplication unto the Almighty, surely he would now awake for thee, Job 8. 5, 6

O then, Up every Soul and be doing. And that before floods of great water come: before the black waves of death are upon thee: yea, before the waters of great affliction overtake thee. And if thou dost sincerely, constantly, fervently seek unto God now in the time of thy prosperity, thou mayest be sure, and in his Name be it spoken to thee, God will remember thee in the day of Adversity.

And this brings to the second Doctrine, which is,

*That men ought, not only to pray unto God for the pardon of their sins, and the salvation of their Souls, but they should be sure to do this in the time wherein the Lord may be found.*

In the Doctrine handling of this Truth, two things may be enquired into: 1. What is implied in this expression of finding the Lord. 2. When is the time wherein he may be found.

Q. 1. What is implied in this expression of finding the Lord?

A. 1. The expression doth intimate, that God may as to his gracious presence be absent from men, even gone from them, so as that they cannot find him, or obtain a gracious meeting with him. Indeed as to his essential presence, he is always and every where to be found. We cannot look any where but God is there, *Psal. cxxxv. 7. who*  
then

ther shall I flee from thy presence; if I ascend up into Heaven behold thou art there, if I make my bed in Hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning (if I were able to fly as swift as the Sun beams from East to west) and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, So hat as to his power and essential presence, God is nowhere excluded, all places being comprehended under that enumeration of Heaven, Hell, Earth and Sea. Thus then he is near to every one. As Paul said to the Athenians, Act. 17: 27 *I beseech you that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be far from any of us.* But as to his gracious presence, he is far from some; indeed from all Christless sinners. They are afar off, until made nigh by the blood of Christ, Eph. 2: 13. And therefore it is that they are in a perishing estate. *Psal. 73: 27. Far is, they that are far from thee shall perish.* Yea, and sometimes the Lord doth withdraw his gracious presence from his own Children, so as that they seek him, but cannot find him, Cant. 5: 6. *My Beloved hath withdrawn himself. I sought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

2. Finding God, doth imply the obtaining his favour together with the special fruits and effects thereof. Pray unto him, in a time wherein he may be found, that is to say, in a time wherein his favour may be obtained. In this sense, the

Phrase is often used in the Scripture, *Hos. 5. 8. They shall go with their flocks, and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him.* Meaning that they should not by all their Sacrifices, obtain the Lords favour. The day will come when the enemies of Christ shall be glad of his favour, but they shall not find it: therefore he saith, *Joh. 7. 34. Ye shall seek me and shall not find me.* Also, the special effects and fruits of divine favour, are implied in this *Finding the Lord.* e.g. Audience of prayer, is a sign of the Lords favour, *1 Job. 5. 15.* when the Lord accepts of mens Prayers, then he is found of them. There is a time wherein God will hear men, if they pray unto him; That is a finding time: and there is time when the Lord becomes *incorruptible*, that all prayers and cries will be in vain, Then finding time is past and gone. The pardon of sin is an effect of Gods favour. Wherefore they whose sins are forgiven, do find the Lord: And of that is the Psalmist speaking in this context. Yea, life and the enjoyment of all desirable good, proceeds from the favour of God, *Psal. 30. 5. In his favour is life.* And therefore in finding the Lord, the obtaining of life and happiness is implied, *Prov. 8. 35. who so findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*

*Qu. st. 1. when may the Lord be found?*

*Ans. 1. Life time is finding time.* There are some, that their finding time doth continue as long

long as they themselves are in this world. The Lord is pleased all that time to be making offers of grace and salvation to them, *1/ai. 63. 2. I have spread out my hands all the day long, i. e. presented gracious tenders of mercy and life, unto rebellious people.* But when death hath overtaken a sinner, his finding time is gone. Men cannot pray as to their bodies, when once the grave hath opened its mouth and swallowed them up, *Eccles. 9. 10. There is no work in the grave whither thou goest.* There is no work then as to any mans particular, nor yet as to his general calling, *Psal. 65. In death there is no remembrance of thee, in the grave who shall give thee thanks.* It is the place of silence. And if poor damned creatures should cry to the Lord, as to their woful souls after death, should they then cry unto him with tears of blood, except before death they obtain an interest in his favour through Jesus Christ; it will be in vain. The Lord will then have no more regard unto them, then *Abraham* had to *Dives*, when he cried and said, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, I am tormented in this flame,* and yet could not by all his doleful prayers and cries, obtain so much as one drop of water, to cool his torments, *Luk. 16. 25.*

2. *The time wherein the means of grace is vouchsafed and continued.* This finding time which I am speaking of, is the same with the day for men to know the things of their peace. Now such

a day do they enjoy that have the Gospel and the means of grace vouchsafed to them. *If thou haist known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace*, Luk. 19. 42. Whilst Christ and his Messengers were treating with them, about the great and everlasting concerns of their souls, that was *their day*. This finding time is the accepted time, and the day of Salvation; 2 Cor. 6. 2. Now when the Gospel is Preached, thats a day for men to look after their Salvation, and a time wherein God will accept of them if they pray unto him, as they should do. It is a fit season for men to be at work whilst the light shineth upon them. So should we be at work about our Salvation, whilst we have the light of the Gospel afforded unto us for that end. The Gospel is compared unto light, *Exh. 5. 8. Walk as Children of the light*. h. c. as becometh the Gospel. Hence Christ said to the *Pharisees*, Joh. 12. 35. *For a little while is the Light with you, walk whilst you have the light, lest darkness come upon you*; intimating not only that the Lord himself would depart from them, but that the Gospel, and means of grace should be removed from that people. The light of the Gospel sheweth men the way to find the Lord. *Yea, for the Lord is near them*. He conueth in the Gospel and offer himself to them: saying, *Behold me, behold me* if they will but turn their eyes and look after him. Wherefore the Apostle telleth the *Ephesians* that

that Christ came, (i.e. in the chariot of the Gospel) and preached peace to them. Eph. 2. 17. This then, is the time to find the Lord in. To this purpose doth the Prophet *Isaiah* speak (Chap. 55. 6.) saying, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: q.d. Now is the time when the Lord is near unto you: and now whilest God is sending his Messengers to reprove and exhort you; now the Lord is near to you, therefore now is a finding time, and should be a praying time.* The Lord is then at the very door: *Rev. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock.* While the Sermon is Preaching Christ is standing at the door of thy house, knocking there; so that there is a blessed opportunity to find him, and so enjoy him for ever.

3. *Times of the Spirits striving.* There are some seasons when the Holy Spirit doth move upon the hearts of men, in a more peculiar manner. Convictions of sin and misery are the stirrings of Gods Spirit, *Job. 4. 6. 8. He shall convince the world of sin.* Sometimes a mans Conscience is convinced that he liveth in the practice of such an evil, or in the omission of such a duty; suppose Prayer in his family, or in secret, for which he neglects his own heart condemns him; Now these troubles and convictions are from the Holy Spirit, especially if convictions rise so high, as to cause terrors and tremblings of heart: as it was with *Felix*, *Act. 24. 25.* who trembled as he heard

heard *Paul* preaching concerning *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgement to come*. He was convicted in his own Conscience, that he had been guilty of much unrighteousness & intemperance, and that therefore without Repentance, and Faith in Christ; in the judgement to come, a sentence of eternal death must be put upon him. Now was the Spirit of God, moving upon his heart. And therefore then was his time to have prayed, and to have found mercy with God. So when good purposes, and strong affections are raised in the hearts of men and women, the holy Spirit is striving with them; as it was with *Agrippa*, when he was almost persuaded to be a Christian, *Act. 26. 28*. There are who have at times, serious and affectionate thoughts of forsaking all for Christ, they could e'en find in their hearts to forsake their sins, and old companions in sin, and to close with Christ upon the Terms of the Gospel; Gods Spirit is mightily striving with such a Soul: And never did poor creature pray unto God with his whole heart, while the Holy Spirit continued striving, but the Lord was found of him. *Finding time* is the same with the *day of grace*; and as long as the Spirit continueth striving, the day of Grace is not done. Therefore if God by the secret motions of his Spirit, say unto the hearts of the children of men, *Seek ye my face*, it highly concerns every such Soul to answer again, *Thy face Lord, will I seek.* *Psal. 27. 8.*



4. *The time of prosperity.* Even before the floods of great water come: The miserable *yrms* are ruined *because they knew not the time of their visitation.* Luk. 19 44. As long as the offers of Grace lasted; and whilst they enjoyed dayes of external peace, that was the time of their visitation, and the day for them to have known the things of their peace. Had they prayed then, as they should have done, they might have been happy for ever. Men will be most likely to be sincere in their praying to God, if they do so in the time of their prosperity, and therefore most like to find him then. There are some, that when trouble is upon them, they will pour out a Prayer, yet the Lord accepts not of them, because they do it not with a sincere heart. *Hos. 7. 14. They have not cried unto me with their hearts, they howled upon their beds, they assemble themselves for Corn and wine, & they rebell against me.* When Drought, and Caterpillars, and Famine was upon them, they would pray; and if the Judges were removed, they would sin, and rebell as bad as ever: so that their <sup>Hearts</sup> ~~Souls~~ were not right in the sight of God, and therefore he did not accept of them, but compares their Prayers to *Howlings*, thereby to signify how odious and abominable they were in the ears of the Holy God of Truth. Wherefore, the Lord calls upon men, that if they would find mercy; or prevent misery from coming upon themselves, they should

pray unto him, before the day of adversity come upon them, *Jer. 13. 16.* Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, before your feet stumble upon the dark Mountains. As yet (saith the Prophet) you have a day of prosperity, pray before that Sun be set upon you. Give glory to God by confessing your sins, and humble seeking his face and favour, before your enemies come, and drive you away before them over the dark mountains of Israel, into a long-lasting Captivity. And this had been the way to have prevented their Captivity.

*3.* The time wherein the Lord is threatening to bring heavy judgements upon men, is a finding, and should be a praying time. The time that is between the Sentence and the Execution. When the Lord uttereth over men a Sentence of Death, and lawfully threatning to execute his sore judgements upon them, those threatnings are conditional: *sc.* If they do not pray as they should do. But if they do pray in earnest, before the day of Execution cometh, 'tis possible they may find mercy and salvation with the Lord, *Jer. 36. 3, 7.* It may be the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, that I may forgive their sin. When God by his word, or by his works, is threatning judgement, there is for all that, A way of mercy, in case he be humbly prayed unto. It may be a finding, and there-

therefore should be a *Praying time*: Zeph. 2. 2, 3. *Gather your selves together before the day bring forth, before the day of the Lords anger come upon you; seek ye the Lord, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lords anger.* The Lords declared end in his threatnings, is, that so men might be awakened to pray unto him, before it be too late. Therefore the great design of the Prophets was to call upon the People to seek unto the Lord for mercy before his judgements came down from Heaven upon them, *Hos. 10. 12. It is time to seek the Lord.* This was the great voice of the Prophets, Since God is threatening to bring such and such judgements, *it is high time for you to seek the Lord*; that threatned evils might be diverted, and the mercy of Heaven obtained.

6. *The time of Youth.* Firstfruits are acceptable unto God, *Gen. 4. 4.* There is a great and solemn Commandment of God, requiring young men to pray unto him, *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth.* And a most gracious promise to encourage them, *Prov. 8. 17. They that seek me early shall find me.* They that pray whilst they are young, seek the Lord early, and may therefore hope that they shall find him. Hence David said unto his Son Solomon, *1 Chron. 28. 9. Know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind: If thou (who art a young man) seek him, he will be found of thee.* These are instances

instances in the Scrip<sup>r</sup>ure, of many, that have prayed unto God in the time of their youth; & he hath been found of them. And there is not so much as one Example to be produced in all the Book of God, concerning one that did in the dayes of his youth, set himself to seek the Lord, that did not find acceptance with him. As for praying young men, I tell you truly, the God of Heaven doth wonderfully delight in them.

*7. The present time is finding time.* Now is the accepted time, therefore all the holy Prophets did earnestly urge those unto whom they spake in the Name of the Lord, unto present Repentance, and seeking the face of God, without any further delay, *Jer. 23. 4 5. The Lord hath sent unto you all his Servants the prophets, they said, Turn ye again, [now] every one from his evil way.* They did not say, if you will pray to morrow, you may neglect God and your own Souls to day. No, but now turn unto him. *Psa. 95. 7. To day if you will hear his voice;* Then you may hope to find acceptance with him, but if thou dost harden thy heart against the voice of God, one day longer, if thou dost neglect Prayer, but one day longer, it may be the Lord will never hear thy voice, nor hearken to thy Prayer throughout the dayes of Eternity.

*Use 1. It is matter of bleeding Lamentation,*  
*that*

that Praying time, and Finding time is so much neglected, and by so many. O that my head were a fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night in secret places because of this thing. What shall I say! Alas! if we look over all the particulars mentioned, we may mourn before the Lord to think how miserable Creatures are neglecting and sinning away their day of grace for ever. Are there not many (Oh! how many) that their whole *life time* hath been misimproved? they live to no end as to soul-saving purposes. They live as if there were no other life but this; as if they had no souls to save, or should never enter upon Eternity. They spend ~~on~~ their dayes in mirth and madness, and after that they go to the dead. Are there not some that have lived it may be twenty years, and yet never prayed in earnest for the pardon of their sins, and the salvation of their Souls, in all their lives? Alas for such poor creatures, their case is lamentable! And are there not many, who regard not the offers of Christ in the Gospel? How often would the Lord Jesus have saved them, but they would not be saved by him? how many Sermons have been lost upon them? thou hast heard it may be a thousand Sermons, and all in vain? this is a lamentable sign, that the Lord intends to cast thee off for ever; yea, that thou art nigh unto cursing, *Jer. 6. 29, 30. Heb. 6. 7, 8* And this will be the sting of Hell, when a forlorn creature

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shall

shall think with himself for ever, I might have had Christ, and mercy, and pardon, and salvation: I heard Sermons about these things; and all was freely offered to me in the Gospel, but I regarded it not, until it was too late. And are there not some that have sinne'd away the blessed stirrings of the Spirit of God from their Souls? It may be thou hast had sorrowful convictions & awakenings of Conscience when time was. Yea, so as to make known the anguish of thy Soul unto this or that servant of God, begging for the help of Prayers: and are all these troubles of spirit come to nothing? If ever poor creature had the black tokens of eternal death upon him, thou art such an one. Dost thou not know, that the Woman whose Travelling pains leave her, and return not; will die most certainly? hast thou seemed to be in the pangs of the new birth; but have thy throws of Conscience left thee. O tremble lest the Lord say unto thee, as *Ezek. 24. 13. Because I purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more.* It had been better for thee never to have been born, then that thou shouldest live to provoke the Lord so to speak, and so to resolve against thee. And are there not many, who neglect God in the time of their prosperity? whilst they enjoy dayes of peace, and health, and strength God calls upon them to repent & pray, & believe but they let their golden season slip away witho

without improving it to seek the Lord until they find him. Like him whom the Lord complais of, *Jer. 23. 21. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst I will not hear.* And are there not many who never mind the solemn warnings of God? They regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands. The Lord giveth them awful warning by a fearful sight in Heaven, but they regard it not. The Lord giveth warning by Judgements in other lands, the report whereof we hear. When God did cut off the Nations, and make their Towns desolate, he said of *Jerusalem, Surely thou wilt fear me, and receive instruction, Zeph. 3. 6, 7.* We hear of a City that was in great part destroyed by a sudden *Earth-quake*, not many Moneths ago. We hear of a sweeping Plague in divers places in *Europe*; which though afar off the Lord giveth us warning thereby. Yea, and so he doth by false rumors amongst our selves. When there was a false report raised the other day, as if the Plague were brought near unto us; how were people amazed? God hath an holy hand in such Rumors; and he would have men make this use of it, to pray unto him that such judgements may be prevented: And the Lord hath given warning by many sudden deaths of late, how many have there been within this twelvemonth that when God sent the Messenger of Death unto them, they had not so much as an

hours time to pray in? O the hardness of the stupid and stony hearts of men, that do not pray *for all this*? And is not the time of youth a time wherein God is forgotten? Are there not young men that seldome pray to God? This is for a Lamentation. For it is possible that the Time of your youth will be your only finding time. There are many who *die in youth*, and if they were such as did not Pray, their Souls are gathered amongst the *Unclean*, even with the souls of those *Sodomites*, who are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, *Job. 36. 14.* As for those that live under the Gospel, (though we may not limit God, who calls home his Elect, some at one age, and some at another, yet) commonly it is so; that if they do not find God in youth, they never find him. Think sadly of it, in the fear of God; you that are thirty, it may be forty years old, and yet in a natural estate to this day. And do not many neglect the *present opportunity* of seeking the face of God in Jesus Christ? like *Felix*, who said to the Apostle, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee, Act. 24. 25.* But alas! he never saw (for ought that doth appear) such another opportunity as that was. Foolish creatures neglect the present time, and by that means their Souls drop into Hell ere they are aware, and then they make a most doleful and eternal lamentation; O the seasons of Grace,  
and



and hopes of mercy which once we had, are lost and gone for ever. Men delay their duty, thinking with themselves *hereafter we will pray*. And because of this one thing, millions of immortal Souls are in Hell, where the bars of the Pit, & the gates of Death are everlastingly shut upon them.

Use 2. *As you love your Souls, or as you desire Salvation, let finding time, be praying time.* Do but consider two things,

1. *As yet you have a Finding time.* Be that known to every Soul before the Lord this day. Say not; I would pray, but I doubt my time to find the Lord is past and gone. As yet thou hast a day of grace. Behold now is an accepted, now is a day of Salvation. Thy body is on this side the Grave, and thy soul on this side Hell; therefore it is possible thou mayest find the Lord. I have somewhere read of a childe that was in danger of being devoured by a wild Beast; but he cried to some that were near to come in and rescue him, saying *Help! help! I am yet alive, I am yet alive*; so I say to thee, help for thy soul is not too late, *for thou art yet alive*; and therefore pray & cry to God for help, as one that doth believe that thou hast an eternal life, & an immortal soul lying at the stake. God is once more offering Salvation to thee. *To you that hear the Gospel this day, is the word of Salvation sent, Act. 13. 26.*

Consider 2. *Thy finding time may soon be gone.* It will not last alwayes, *Gen. 6. 3.* God saith, *My*

*spirit shall not always strive.* It may be after this Sermon is ended, Hee'l never strive with thy rebellious heart more; and then thy *Finding time* is gone. Pray now will come too late then. A man that had been gilly of great back slidings from God, who any word of comfort was applied unto him, cried out, *All too late now.* If it was said to him, you must make sure of an interest in Christ, he would answer, *all too late,* if any did exhort him to pray for the pardon of his sin, he would make the same Reply, *All too late.* So it will be with thee, if thou neglect Prayer until *Finding time* be expired and gone. Remember that Scripture, *Luk. 13. 24, 25. Strive to enter in at the strait Gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* How cometh that to pass? truly because they seek when it is too late. *After the Master of the house hath shut the door they begin to stand without & to knock, saying, Lord, Lord open to us.* But the door of mercy is not opened to them. Had you come and knocke sooner, you had found mercy, the strait Gate of life had been opened to you. But now knocking, calling, praying, crying will be in vain. O consider of it, thou poor sinful creature: within a little time thy Soul will be out of thy body. And if thou hast not obtained an interest of Christ, and in the favour of God through Christ, before that hour come upon thee, the floods of great waters, will overwhelm thee:

The waves of death will swallow thee up; thy Soul will be thrown into the dead Sea, amidst the roaring floods of Fire and Brimstone which are there forever. Then will *Finding time* be gone, and Pray r come too late.

Now then pray unto God in a time wherein he may be found, and do it with thy whole heart, remembering that Scripture for thy encouragement. *Jer. 29. 12, 13. You shall go and pray unto me and I will hearken unto you, ye shall seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart.*

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*The True Fears of God will Protrise  
Family Prayer.*

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· ACTS 10. 2.

*One that feared God with all his House: And  
Prayed alway.*

**I**N this Chapter, we have an account of the great acceptance which *Cornelius* his prayers found wth God; together with the gracious effects following thereupon. In the two first verses *Cornelius* is described, 1. From the City where he dwelt viz. *Cæsarea*. 2. From his Calling, he was a Souldier; and no common Soldier, but a *Centurion*. 3. From the Nation which he did belong unto; he was an *Italian*, a Commander belonging to the *Italian Band*. And indeed *Cornelius* is a *Roman* Name. 4. He is described from his Religion, in this verse, he was a *devout man*, h. e. He was though a *Roman*,  
and

and so a *Gentile* by nature, yet no meer *Heathen* in respect of his Religion, but a *Profelyte*. Elsewhere *Profelytes* are styled *Devout Persons*, *Act.* 17.4. We read of *Devout Greeks*, that is such as were *Profelytes* to the *Jewish Religion*. Hence also, *Cornelius* is described to be one that feared God, *i. e.* that did worship the only true God. Thus *Act.* 13.26. *Children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever amongst you feareth God;* meaning such as though they were not (as the *Jews* are) descended from *Abraham*, nevertheless worshipped the God of *Abraham* as the *Jews* did: These *Fearers of God* are in verse 43. called *Religious Profelytes*. There were two sorts of *Profelytes* amongst the *Jews* of old.

1. Some that were styled *Profelytes of the Covenant*, those were circumcised, and also admitted to all priviledges in the Church of *Israel*; no difference being made either as to Civil or Church communion between them, and those that were natural *Israelites*.

2. Those that were styled *Profelytes of the Gate*. These did own the God of *Israel* to be the only true God; and hoped for Salvation by the *Messiah*; and did endeavour to frame their lives according to the holy Rules of the Moral Law; *Cornelius* was a *Profelyte* of this, and not of the former sort. And hence *Peter* was unwilling to converse with him, until such time as God by a vision commanded him so to do. The truth of

*Cornel.*

*Cornelius* his Religion is in this verse intimated by two things.

1. In that he was careful, not only to pray unto God himself alone, but that his Family should do so too. He did worship God with all his *House*, h. e. with his whole Family. The *house* is frequently in the Scripture put for the Family, *Gen.* 7. 1. & 30. 30. *Exod.* 12. 3.

2. In that he did thus *alway*. He did not only pray with his Family once or so, but *always*? That is to say, alway in the due and stated seasons for that duty: the meaning is not, as though *Cornelius* did spend his time in nothing else but Prayer and Religious Exercises, but that he was constant in his Attendance unto that duty, in the seasons appointed for that end.

The Doctrine which the Words do therefore afford unto us, is,

*That the true Fears of God will be constant in the practice of that duty of Family Prayer.*

In order to the clearing of this Truth, there are three things to be enquired into,

1. How it doth appear that Family Prayer is a duty?

2. What is implied in being constant therein, or in doing thus alway?

3. The Reasons why they that truly fear God do thus practise.

**Q.** 1. *He doth it appear that Family Prayer is a Duty?*

**Ans.** 1. *The Scripture doth enjoin this.* God in his word, commands men to pray with all Prayer, *Eph. 6. 18.* Not only Prayer in closets, and in solemn Assemblies, but in Families, is comprehended under that expression of *All Prayer*. Nor can a man be said to pray with all prayer, except he doth practice publick, secret, and Family Prayer. And in the Scripture, Husbands and Wives are required to live lovingly together, *that their prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. 3. 7.* what prayers? surely Family Prayers. They that are contending and quarrelling one with another, are very unfit to go to prayer together: Therefore Husband and Wife should live in love, that so they may not be indisposed to pray together in their Family. Again, the Scripture declareth, that Men should take care that their Families as well as themselves serve God. Fathers are to bring up their Children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, *Eph. 6. 4.* which they cannot do except they pray with them, and by example as well as precept, let them see that God ought to be worshipped and prayed unto. Thus *Ioshua* was resolved to do, *Chap. 24. ver. 15.* *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* *Ioshua* did exhort the Children of *Israel*, that they should all of them in their Houses serve God, which doth imply Prayer unto him,

him; inasmuch as prayerless Families can not be said, to be God-serving, God-fearing Families.

2. As there are Scripture Precepts requiring this duty, so there are *Scripture Examples*, which God hath caused to be recorded in his Word, for our instruction and imitation. We find that the Lord Christ, who hath left himself for an example in this as well as in other things, for us to follow; did pray with his Family, *Luk. 9. 18.* As he was alone praying, his Disciples (who were his Family) were with him. And when Christ did keep the Passover with his domestick Disciples alone, it is certain that he prayed with them, *Mat. 26. 18. &c.* David also, was wont to worship God with his Family. And was resolved to continue in that practice all his dayes. Hence he could say, as *Psal. 101. 2.* *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.* And we read concerning him, that after he had been attending the worship of God in publick, he returned to bless his house, *1 Chron. 16. 43.* so that he did not think it enough to worship God in a publick solemn Assembly amongst his People, but when he cometh home, he prayeth with his Family, that the blessing of God might be there.

3. Of old there were not only Publick, but Private Family-Sacrifices. Jonathan relates concerning David, that he said to him, *our Family hath a Sacrifice in the City, and my Brother commanded me to be there, 1 Sam. 20. 29.* which undoubted-



doubtedly were not without Family Prayers. And although Sacrifices in a legal, literal sense are ceased, in these dayes of the Gospel; Christ by that one offering of himself, having put an end thereto, yet spiritual Sacrifices must be offered up still, 1 Pet. 2. 5. *Ye are a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ.* When Christians offer up prayers and praises unto the Lord, these are spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ. And indeed every Believer is a spiritual Priest. Jesus Christ *hath made us Priests unto God and his Father, Rev. 1. 6.* And inasmuch as he is a Priest in his own Family, therefore he ought to offer up spiritual Sacrifices there. Every Master of a Family is a Prophet in his own Family, because he ought to instruct them in the things of God: and a King there, inasmuch as he ought to govern his Family according to the rules of the word of God, and a Priest also, for that he ought to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices therein.

4. *The very light of nature teacheth men that Family Prayer is a duty.* Hence the Gentiles that had no Scripture to direct them, yet have made conscience of Family worship. They had their Penates, household gods, whom they did adore. Yea, *Mahometans* at this day, worship their God not only in publick Assemblies, but in their Families. So that men who call themselves Christians, and yet acknowledge no God in their Fami-

lies are in that thing worse then Infidels. Many Heathen People, nay *Turks* will at the day of Judgement rise up against such pretended Christians, and condemn them.

Q. 2. What is implied in a mans praying [alway] with his Family?

Ans. This Praying *alway* implieth frequency in that duty. Family Prayer should be attended daily. In that sense the phrase is sometimes used in the Scripture. As when it is said, that *Mephiboseth* did eat (continually, or as the Hebrew word *Tamid* signifieth) *alway* at the Kings Table; the meaning is, that it was his daily custom so to do. Thus *Cornelius* with his house prayed *alway*; Family prayer was daily observed in that house. Families need daily supplies of mercy. And there are Family occasions to be attended every day, which Masters in Families are concerned to look up to God, that his blessing may be thereon: And there are daily mercies which they ought to bless God for. Yea, it is good to practise this duty more than once every day, *b. i.* in the morning and in the evening also. It is a good thing to praise the Lord, and shew forth his loving kindness in the morning, and every evening, *Psal. 93. 1, 2.* The continual offering under the Law was that whereby prayer was typified: and that was to be both in the morning and at the even, *Exod. 29. 38. Num. 28. 3, 4.* So should it be as to Family Prayer.

And

And therefore is very observable, that the *A-*  
*p**ostle* speaking to Masters in Families, useth that  
 exp<sup>r</sup>ession, *continue in prayer*, Col. 4. 2. In which  
 words he doth evidently allude unto the conti-  
 nual offering under the Law, which was to be at-  
 tended daily, both at morning and at even; you  
 (saith he) that are Masters of Families, forget  
 not the continual offering of Prayer, which you  
 ought to present before the Lord. It is as if he  
 had said, pray constantly morning and evening  
 in your Families. Therefore,

2. *This exp<sup>r</sup>ession implieth perseverance.* Men  
 should not only begin to practise this duty, but  
 they ought to hold on therein, all their dayes.  
 Christ hath taught us, *that men ought alway to*  
*pray and not to faint*, Luk. 18. 1. And we are  
 bid to *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. 5. 18. As  
 there ought to be perseverance in attending unto  
 the publick Worship of God, on the times ap-  
 pointed for that end; as *Hezekiah* profeſſeth  
 that he had taken up a resolution to praise God  
*all the dayes of his life in the house of the Lord*, Isai.  
 38. 20. So should men praise the Lord, and pray  
 to him, all the dayes of their lives in their own  
 houses. There ought to be perseverance in all  
 prayer, and therefore Christians are to continue  
 all their dayes in the practise of private or fa-  
 mily, as well as in publick and in closet prayer:  
 So may they be said to do as *Cornelius* did, even  
 to pray alway, Eph. 6. 18.

*Q. 3. Whence is it that the true Fears of God do thus?*

*Reas. 1.* Because they that truly fear God respect the honour of his Name. They cannot but desire that God might be honoured every where, and more especially in their own Families. Now prayer honours God. Hence is that expression, *Mat 15 8. they honour me with their lips*: when men pray unto God with their lips, they honour him therewith: and when they pray with their hearts, as well as their lips, they honour him with both. As when they neglect this so great a duty, they withhold that honour from God, which is due unto him from his creatures, *I sai. 43. 23. thou hast not honoured me with thy Sacrifices.* So doth the Lord say to Masters of Families, that pray not with their houses, thou hast not honoured me with thy prayers. But as for those that call upon his Name, their prayers and praises glorifie him. When men own the Lord to be the God of their Families they put honour upon him. And so it is when Family worship is duly upheld.

*Reas. 2.* They that truly fear God, are desirous that the interest of Religion should be upheld and promoted. One that is truly Religious himself can not but desire that others may be so too. *Paul* being himself a real Christian, earnestly wished that others were in that respect as he was. When *Agrippa* said to him, thou al-

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most perswaded me to be a Christian, he replied, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that bear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these Bonds, Act, 26. 28, 29. so it is ( and cannot but be ) where there is true grace Especially they are desirous that those who are related to them; and are of the same Family with them, may be acquainted with the good wayes of the Lord. Therefore they will make Conscience, not only to pray for them, but to pray with them; since thereby Religion and the Fear of God will be promoted. And to have Religion in Families is the way to have it elsewhere. Families are the Nurseries of all Societies. If Religion should not be upheld there, it would fall to the ground every where.

Use 1. *For Reprehension.* And there are many that fall under just and sad Reproof from this Doctrine.

1. It condemns those that live in the total neglect of this duty of Family prayer. And what is like to come on prayerless Families at last? Let Prayerless Fathers, and prayerless Masters hear the word of the Lord, & tremble at it. O that you would consider, how you expose not only your selves but Families, to the vengeance of Heaven. How often have you been put in mind of that awful Scripture, *Jer. 10. 25. Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not.* What's  
E that

that to us? some one will be ready to say; we are no Heathen, we are all Christians: but mark what follows; *and upon the Families that call not upon the Name.* Not only professed Heathen but Families that live like Heathen without any prayer, the fury of the Almighty will come pouring down from Heaven upon them. Hence a temporal judgments upon families many times. The Lord kill Children with death, because Parents do not show them an example of Religion to pray with them in the family as well as for them in secret. Yea, the Souls of your poor Children are ruined by his sin of yours. And O how sad will it be when God shall require the blood of the Souls of Children at the hands of their prayerless Fathers; and the blood of the souls of servants at the hands of their prayerless Masters. Think with your selves what answer you will make before Jesus Christ the Son of God at the last and great day. If thy Children shall be thine accusers before the Lord then; if any of them shall stand before the Lord Jesus in the day when he shall judge the World, and say, Lord, there is the man that was my Father, I never heard him pray in all my life, and that made me live in the neglect of God also; or if thy Servants shall any of them say, Lord, there is the man that was my Master, I lived in his house so many months, but I never heard him praying unto God all that time, what answer wilt thou

thou then make for thy self? you shall not be able to plead ignorance. For I will then call Heaven and Earth to record against you, that you were often told of your duty in this particular. And yet I hear some say, that there are many prayerless families in this great town. The thing is lamentable, if it be so. What, for men that call themselves Christians, to have no prayer in their families? for men that live under the light of the Gospel, to live without Prayer in their families! for men that live in *New England*, and that have lived in *Boston*; not so much as to pray in their families! Such have known to do good, and yet have not done it; therefore sin and guilt and wrath most fearful doth abide them. And this word reacheth Masters of Vessels, that never pray with their Ships Company, who are their Family, with whom they ought to worship God continually.

2. This reproveth those that do not pray in their Families *Alway*. There are some that pray in their families: but when is it? once in a week perhaps. It may be on the Sabbath day; they will pray in their families; and serve God therein no more all the dayes of the week after. Is this to pray *alway* when there are such wide and woful gaps in prayer? It is thy duty to serve God all the dayes of thy life, Luk. 175. dost thou serve God all thy dayes, when thou dost serve him, and pray to him, but one day in seven?

God will not be put off so. When once thou shalt see the day wherein thy family shall stand in no need of Gods blessing; neglect Prayer in thy family for that day; but till then willingly omit it not under any pretence whatsoever. And are there not some, that time was when they would worship God with their families; but they are fallen away, and have cast off the practice that is good? O foolish creatures, you did run well, but who hath driven you back? Remember the word that was spoken by the Lord Jesus, *Luk. 9.62. No man having put his hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.* Didst thou begin to pray with thy family? This was to set thy hand to the Lords plough: we to thee if thou drawest it back again.

3. This reproveth those who do that in families which is quite contrary unto praying and serving God therein. Are there not families in this place, wherein there is Drinking to excess, Gaming, Wantonness, Uncleanness? Indeed, when such deeds of darkness are brought to light, they are put to shame amongst us; and it is a great mercy to the Land, that open profaneness and wickedness is punished, but the Lord seeth what is done in private Houses. He knoweth who they are, that *assemble themselves by troops in the Harlots Houses*, Jer. 5.7. And are there not families in the which instead of Prayer, there is

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Curſing, Swearing, Sabbath breaking; & the like Tranſgreſſions that provoke the glorious eyes of the Holy Majeſty of Heaven? Let the Maſters of ſuch Families look to themſelves. For the Sabbath breaking, & other profaneſſes that are indulged in their Families, will be charged upon them, who ought to rule their Houſes better, *Exod. 20. 10.*

**Uſe 2. Of Exhortation:** *To be conſtant in the practice of this neceſſary duty.* They that are ſo, their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. If they be ſincere therein, ſpecial mercy will follow: we ſee it in this example of *Cornelius*. He worſhipped God with his Houſe, and prayed alway; and what ſpecial notice did the Lord take of him? thoſe prayers were not loſt. And ſometimes when outward Judgements come God ſh. with peculiar mercy to praying Families. I remember I have read of a Town in *Switzerland*, that was deſtroyed with an Earthquake, excepting only one houſe, where it ſo fell out, that at the time when the Earth quake happened, the maſter of the houſe was at prayer with his Family. But eſpecially ſpiritual bleſſings, are wont to follow upon the ſincere attendance unto this duty. If there be a praying Father, it is to be hoped that there will be praying Children: and if there be a praying Maſter, it is to be hoped there will be praying Servants. And is not

that a blessed thing, for a man to have the Children and Servants of his own family praying for him continually? Thus do we read concerning *Abrahams* Servant, *Gen. 24. 12.* He said, *O Lord God of my Master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my Master Abraham.* How came *Eliezer* to be a praying Servant? doubtless, he observed that his Master was much in prayer; and such an Example might well be followed.

I shall only answer two or three Objections in a few words, and conclude.

*Obj. 1.* Some one may say, *I have not time to pray in my Family.* My business and worldly occasions are such as I cannot attend Prayer.

*Ans.* No man shall fare the worse as to his outward estate, because he doth make conscience to set some time apart daily to serve God; so mans Family shall be the poorer, but rather the richer for that. O that you would remember and consider more on that Scripture, *Mat. 6. 33. Seek ye first the Kingdoms of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* And it is certainly better to want time for other things, then to take no time to pray in. Yea, a man should rather deny himself a little of his natural rest and sleep, then to live an ungodly, prayerless life. Nor is it needful, or indeed convenient, that Family duties should be ordinarily long and tedious; and therefore the objection

is a vain excuse. There are others in the world, that have as much busines upon their hand as thou hast, who never belets can find time to pray in their closets and in their families too. Had not *David* as little time to spare, and as much busines to attend as any man can ordinarily pretend unto; yet he *always* found time to pray in. Let thy Conscience speak; canst thou not find time for other things that are of less concernment? Thou canst find time if my be to sit in some Tavern and there to discourse, the Lord knoweth about what. If that time which is spent in vain, unprofitable discourse, were spent in Communion with God, it would be happy for thee. Canst thou find time for vain discourse, and yet not find time for prayer? and canst thou then think that God will ever find a time to save thy poor soul? deceive not thy self, thou must be another man, or that time will never come.

Object. 2. *I am ashamed to pray in my Family?*

Ans. What ashamed to own God, and the Lord Jesus Christ! dost thou not know that thats the way for a man to lose his Soul for ever? see else what the Lord Jesus hath spoken, *Mark 8. 3 last verses.* *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own Soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul: whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in*

the glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels. If thou art ashamed of prayer, thou art ashamed to own the wayes of Christ: and then what will become of thy precious and immortal Soul?

Object 3. *I would pray in my Family, but I cannot, I have not the gift of utterance and expression?*

Ans. 1. *It is better for thee to make use of a form then not to pray at all.* I confess, I look upon it as sinful to make use of those *Forms of Prayer* which are taken out of the *Popes Mass-Book*, because in so doing men put too much honour upon an Idol. It is also true that the imposition of *Forms of Prayer* is unwarrantable; yet all use of *Forms* is not prohibited in the Scripture, witness the *Form of Blessing* therein expressed. Learned and Judicious Mr. *Cartwright* doth from *Lu. 24. 35.* conjecture, that ordinarily Christ used the same words in his Blessing at Meal times, with his *Domestick Disciples*. Now there is no man of ordinary understanding, but he may attain unto a *Form of Prayer*; and he had better make use of that, then to live without any worship of God at all in his Family. But I am far from perswading you to take up with *Forms*. Therefore,

2. *Practise*, and that will make you able. As in other things practice maketh men ready and able so it is in respect of the gift of Prayer. Some

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Some that when they began first to Pray, were able to make but four weekes of it, by frequent practice have attained unto an excellent gift in Prayer. And there are some who complain they cannot Pray, whenas it is because they do not practise. If they would set upon practice, God would be with them. And O that I could prevail with those of you, that make this Objection against praying in your families; to go home and make trial. I am perswaded that if you would but try, and set upon the practice of Family Prayer in earnest, the Lord God would be with you.

3. *Labour for the true fear of God in your hearts.* No Man that truly fears God, but he can pray in some measure, as you heard from *Psal. 32. 6. Everyone that is godly shall pray.* Grace will make a man sensible of his Spiritual wants, and that will set him a praying. They that see themselves perishing will cry to God for Salvation. So is it with the Godly man. Yes, where there is true grace, there will be family Prayer. The Lord saith *He will pour upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of Grace,* and then Families, Families, would pray and mourn apart, *Zech. 12. 10.*

4. *Be much in Secret Prayer:* go into thy Closet; there beg for grace; yea, pray for the Spirit

spirit of Prayer. That the Lord would be pleased to give his Holy Spirit unto you, and thereby enable you to pray. And by praying in thy Closet, thou wilt be made able to pray with thy Family. So mayest thou become like to *Cornelius*, who feared God with all his house and prayed alway.

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*The Sincere Servants of God will make Conscience of Secret Prayer.*

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2 TIM. I. 3.

*Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my Prayers day and night.*

**T**He Apostle Paul in this verse doth intimate two things.

1 His own sincerity in serving God. He freely confesseth himself to be the Lords Servant *God whom I serve*. And there are two expressions, both which may denote his sincerity therein. One is that of his serving God *from his fore-fathers*. He served the same God, and after the same manner that his fore-fathers had done. As for his immediate fore-fathers they were *Jews and Pharisees*; and time was when he had served God as they had taught him: but those words may have respect to more remote Fathers, viz.

*viz.* The holy Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, &c.* Another expression denoting the Apostles sincerity, is, that of his serving God *with a pure Conscience*, which implieth that he was ever careful to act according to the light of his conscience; so indeed he was before his conversion unto Christ, *Act. 23. 1.* It implieth also, that his heart was purified by faith in the Lord Jesus. For only they have a pure conscience in the sight of God, who are purged from the guilt of sin, in the blood of Christ. It implieth moreover, an holy conversation; a due respect both to first and second Table duties: Mens Consciences are wont to be according to their actions: evil actions will pollute the Conscience: yea, the expression imports inward as well as outward serving God, *Rom. 1. 9.*

2. The Apostle in this verse, intimateth his love and affection unto *Timothy*. Both in that he did give thanks to God for him. So the verse begins, *I thank God*, namely for *Timothy*, partly in that *Timothy* had such a great respect for *Paul*, and it is matter of thankfulness unto God, when he giveth a man a great interest in the hearts of others who fear the Lord, though in gifts his inferior. He saith in the next verse, *I am mindful of thy tears*. Probably in those words, he may have respect unto the tears which *Timothy* shed, at his parting with the Apostle, when he removed from a *Epheſus*: and he did bless God for

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for the grace which he saw in *Timothy*; that there was *Faith unfeigned in him, which dwelt first in his Grandmother Lois, and in his Mother Eunice* verse 5. We should bless God for the grace we see in others, and especially in young men. *Paul* was now aged, and hastening out of the world; but he thanked God, when he saw that *Timothy* a young man did inherit the graces of his godly predecessors. And he must needs rejoyce the more, to see how Religion and the fear of God was propagated from generation to generation, even to the third generation.

Again, he testified his affection towards *Timothy*, by being abundant in prayer for him. We find that this *Apostle* doth begin another *Epistle* after the same manner, signifying his affection to those he wrote unto, by declaring how he did give thanks and pray on their behalf, *Rom. 1. 8. 9.* The Prayers here referred unto, must of necessity be understood of his secret Prayers. For we cannot in reason suppose, that he did alwayes remember *Timothy* in publick, but in his secret addresses to the Throne of Grace; which shews that he was constant and conscionable in the practice of that sort of Prayer,

From which consideration the Doctrine is,  
That the sincere Servants of God, will make  
conscience to practise that duty of secret Prayer, day  
and night without ceasing.

There

There are three things that may here be enquired into.

1. How it doth appear that the sincere Servants of God, will make conscience of practising that duty of Secret Prayer?

2. What is implied in this expression of praying day and night without ceasing?

3. The Reason why men, especially sincere Christians should practice this duty?

Q. 1. How doth it appear that the sincere Servants of God will make conscience of practising that duty of Secret Prayer?

Ans. 1. The many Instances recorded in the Scripture, concerning the faithful Servants of God, who have conscientiously practised this duty, are an evidence of the truth of this Doctrine.

As to the great and essential duties of Religion, all that truly fear God, practise alike: as the Apostle doth here intimate, when he saith, *I serve God from my fore-fathers.* A true Servant of God, will follow the pious example of those that have gone before him walking in the same way of holiness, which they have done, *Prov. 220. Heb. 6. 12.* Now concerning this duty of secret Prayer, we find many Examples (both in the Old Testament, and in the New) of the Lords Servants, who have thus practised; and that as to all sorts of men, Superiors, Inferiors, Fathers, Children Masters, Servants who have had the fear of God planted in their hearts, thus did *Abraham*

be tharr, Gen. 18. 23. and Eliezer, Abrahams  
 golly Servant, Gen. 24. 12. And Isaac  
 his gracios Son; It is noted of him, ver.  
 63. *That he went out to meditate*; or (as the He-  
 brew word *Lafuach* may be read,) *to pray*. The  
 word signifies both to pray and to meditate, and  
 it is not improbable, that Isaac did at that  
 time, nothing but what was his daily custom to  
 do, even retire himself from all company, for  
 secret prayer and meditation. And the like we  
 read concerning Jacob, that he did wrestle with  
 the Lord in secret Prayer, Gen. 32. 24. They  
 are not the spiritual seed of Jacob that never do  
 thus. I might mention Hezekiah, Daniel, Jer-  
 emiah, Peter, and many other holy Servants of  
 God, of whom we read in the Scripture, that  
 they did practise this duty. Yea, we have the  
 greatest example that ever was, set before us for  
 our imitation in this particular, that is Christs  
 own example; of whom it is said, that He de-  
 parted into a solitary place and there prayed, Mark  
 1. 35. *That He went apart to pray*, Mat. 14. 23.  
*That he withdrew himself and prayed*, Luk. 5. 16.  
 And as the Lord Jesus Christ said, respecting  
 another duty, *I have given you an example: that ye  
 should do as I have done*, Joh. 13. 15. so doth he  
 say as to this duty of Secret Prayer: *I have gi-  
 ven you an example, and caused it to be entered  
 upon everlasting Record, that so you that are  
 my Disciples may in this follow me: and truly*  
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the sincere Disciples of Christ, will make conscience, *so to walk as he walked* Joh. 2. 6. They will strive to write after the blessed Copy, which their Master Christ hath set before them.

2. *The truth is further evident, in that every sincere Servant of God doth make Conscience of obeying all his Commandments*, Psal. 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy precepts.* Now the Lord hath commanded men that they should worship him, not only in publick, and in Families, but in secret also, Eph. 6. 18. *Pray with all prayer*: we have formerly shewed, that secret prayer is in that precept enjoined, as well as publick and family Prayer. And when the Lord in his word saith to men, *commune with your hearts*, Psal. 4. 4. those two great duties, wherein much of Religion doth consist, viz. self examination, and secret Prayer are implied. Yea, this duty is most expressly commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, who saith *when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret*, Matth. 6. 6. The sincere man doth not live in the commission of any known sin, nor in the wilful omission of any known duty. Surely then, not in the omission of so great and known and plainly commanded duty as this of secret prayer, is:

3. *He that is sincere doth in special aim at approving himself in the sight of God.* Hence is that expression

**E**xpression of *Godly sincerity*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. be-  
cause the sincere man doth especially desire to  
have Gods approbation. And therefore he ab-  
stains from secret sins, as *Joseph* did; yea, he  
dare not so much as in his thoughts give way unto  
that, which he knoweth sinful, because he re-  
members that the eye of God is upon him and  
doth therefore study to approve himself, not on-  
ly unto men, but unto God. Hence also he  
practiseth secret duties, which the Lord alone is  
witness of. This we see in *Nathaniel*, that Isra-  
elite indeed in whom there was no reigning guile  
*Job. 1. 47 48.* when that sincere Israelite was al-  
one; under the Fig-tree, no doubt praying there;  
the Son of God who hath eyes like a flame of  
Fire saw him, and did highly approve of his  
sincerity, of which the spirit that breathed in his  
secret prayers was a great discovery.

4. *They that are sincere do in a peculiar manner  
delight in those duties wherein the greatest intimacy  
with God is to be enjoyed.*

**T**hats one difference between an Hypocrite  
and a sincere child of God. An hypocrite will  
rest in the external performance of duty, though  
he hath no communion with God therein, when-  
as one that is sincere doth aim at that in duty;  
and therefore the more intimacy of communion  
with God, is to be enjoyed, the more careful is  
he not to neglect such a duty. Now this is true  
concerning *Secret Prayer*. Did *Abraham*, did

*Jacob*, did *Moses*, did *Daniel*, and other servants of the Lord, whom we read of in the Scripture, ever meet with more of God, then when they were in secret, pouring out their hearts before him? Intimate friends when they are alone, can speak more freely, and have a fuller communion then when others are by: so it is here. A Believer can not so freely express himself before the Lord as to many particulars when others are by, as he can when there is none present but God and he. In secret places, he can speak his whole heart; and pour out his soul into the bosome of God, and of Jesus Christ

Q. 2. *what is implied in this expression, of praying day and night without ceasing?*

Ans. 1. It implieth constancy in the practice of this duty. Thus when it is said, *Pray without ceasing*. 1 Thess 5. 17. i. e. don't begin to practise the duty, and afterwards leave off; but hold out all your dayes therein. It is the same with that, Eph. 6. 18. *Praying with all perseverance*. So that Phrase of *night and day*, intends the same thing. Rev. 7. 15. *They serve him day and night in his Temple*, h. e. continually and without intermission. Thus *Isai. 62. 6*. *The watchmen of Jerusalem shall not hold their peace day nor night*, h. e. they shall hold on in their duty. Time you know is divided into day and night. If then a man shall continue to serve God, both by night and by day. then he doth serve him alwayes.

2. It implieth Frequency. Those words wit<sup>h</sup>

will pray in Secret.

84

~~out ceasing~~, some read without intermission. Not but that the duty of Prayer may and must be intermitted, as to actual performance, that so other duties as to our general or particular calling may be attended, but the spirit of the duty should not be intermitted, Christians must be careful that they never lose that: There ought to be an habitual inclination, and readiness to attend the duty of prayer, whenever called thereunto: Also, there should be a frequency therein, as to actual performance. And when it is said, that a man should pray in secret, *day and night*, that implieth, that he should do so very often, *Psal. 1. 2. 1 Th. 5. 3. 10.* Indeed, secret Prayer should be every mans daily practice. Therefore when Christ bid his Disciples pray in secret, he bids them say, *Give us this day, &c. Mat. 6. 6, 11.* from whence we may infer that secret Prayer should be a Christians daily practice. It is not determined in the Scripture, how often every man must pray in secret: Only that he ought to do thus *daily*. We find that *Daniels* constant course was to pray by himself three times every day, *Dan. 6. 10.* And *David* saith, that he did praise God *seven times a day*, *h. c.* often times, *Psal. 119. 164.* And there is great reason that men should offer prayers and praises before God in secret, at least once every day, and once every night; so may they be said to pray without ceasing night and day.

We come now to enquire into the reasons of this Doctrine.

G 2

Reas.

*Reas. 1. From the consideration of the omnipresence of God. He seeth and heareth what is done not only in publick Assemblies, and in Families, but in closets, Jer. 23. 24. Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord, do not I fill Heaven and Earth? This reason is urged as an Argument for secret Prayer, even because our Heavenly Father seeth in secret, Mat 6. 6. If men do not practise this duty, it argueth great Atheisme, and that they do not really, and with their whole hearts, believe the omnipresence of God; so by the practise hereof, they testify that they have the sense of this Truth upon their hearts; therefore should they pray in secret.*

*Reas. 2. Because there are many requests fit and necessary to be mentioned before the Lord in secret, that may not be expressed before others, 1. e. g. Requests concerning a mans particular wants, which may press him, and oppress him: and concerning his secret sins, which he hath been guilty of before the Lord. If God by his providence hath kept a mans sins from the knowledge of the world, he would sin grievously in divulging his own secret sins, and yet as ever he doth desire the pardon of them, or the salvation of his soul, he must confess and bewail them before God in in secret places: in which respect, secret prayer is necessary. Again, a child of God may be molested with the prevalency of some particular corruption or temptation, which it is not meet to*  
*speake*



Speak of before others, yet it concerns him to cry unto God day & night for power against it. There are also requests which may respect particular persons, whose cases and circumstances may be such as others should not know of; upon which account also prayer in secret is necessary. There are some that a man may have special reason to pray for them in his secret addresses to the Throne of grace, as *Paul* for *Timothy*. There are also some that we ought to pray against them, v. s. special and implacable Enemies of the Lords Name & People, w<sup>h</sup>om it may so be convenient to mention whilst others are in hearing; but we should put the Lord in mind of them, and those arrows which are shot out of closets, will at last fall upon them, and smite them down into the pit.

*Reas. 3. Equity requires this from the Lords Servants.* He brings them into his chambers; *Can. 1. 4. The King has brought me into his Chambers.* Therefore they ought to bring him into their chambers. There is a secret providence of God at work for them continually, *Psa. 31. 20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion.* Shall the Lord hide his Servants in these chambers of safety which he hath prepared for them? & shall not they pray unto him and praise him in their secret Chambers? yea, and as for sincere Believers, the Lord hath provided chambers for

them in his house, even in the Palace Royal of Heaven, there to praise his Name for ever more. There ore in the mean time they should praise him and pray un. o h m day and night in their Chambers here. The Lord said unto the Pro-  
*phete Zechariah, If thou wilt keep my charge, I will give thee places to walk amongst these that stand by. Zech. 3. 7* intimating that the faithful Servants of God, shall ore day wa:k in the Galleries of Heaven, amongst the Holy Angels that are the c. It is but reason then, that they should bring the Lord into t'eir Closets here upon earth.

*Uti 1. Of Reprehension:*

1. *To them that neglect Secret Prayer.* Are there not many whose Consciences are smiting them whilst the Word of the Lord is speaking to them. How many Children, and young ones that never go alone to pray! You children did you this day go, & the last night go alone to pray? yea, and there are elder ones, that the chambers they lodge in, will witness against them at the last day, for lying in the neglect of secret Prayer before the Lord. They are many times alone whole nights together, but as it is said of the wicked, *God is not in all their thoughts.* Well, be assured, if ever God intend mercy to thy soul, he will make thee get alone to pray, and to pour out thy Soul in his presence. For (as I have formerly shewed) in Conversion, thats one of the first things, a poor sinner begins to be in earnest in his Secret Prayers

Prayers and cries to Heaven. As it was said of *Paul*, while in the pangs of the new birth, *Act. 9. 11. Behold he prayeth*, so if the Lord convert and save thy soul. *Behold!* thou wilt pray in secret.

2. This R-proof belongs to them also, who are not frequent and constant in the practice of this duty. Alas! I know there have been many that the Word of the Lord hath met with them; they have been Sermon sick, and then they would pray in secret; but they have not done thus without *craving*. Their convictions have died and they became as prayerless as ever in their lives before. Or it may be, some distressing affliction or other, hath brought them upon their knees before the Lord. Like those in *Isai 26. 16. Lord, in trouble they visited thee, they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them.* Ah! Lord God, hath it not been thus, with many a soul that hears me this day? but their distresses being removed, they continue not in secret prayer. "Oh consider what the Scripture saith, *Heb. 10. 38. If any draw back my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* To begin a course of Prayer, and then to leave off again is to draw back. Will the Lord take pleasure in such? He hath said, he will not. And yet I wish there be not Professors of Religion. Church members, whose consciences do (or may) accuse them for inconstancy in the performance of this great duty of secret

prayer. If thou art such an one, thou hast on thee one of the sad marks of an Hypocrite: for it is said of the Hypocrite *Will he always call upon God?* Job 27. 10. I wonder how such men, & women, can think that they belong to God, as that they have a real interest in heaven, who can find in their hearts to live without secret communion with him: especially considering, that the Scripture tells them, that he that shall allow himself in the wilful breach of the least Commandment, shall not be admitted, nor accounted of in the Kingdome of Heaven *Mat. 5. 19.* where then will they appear, who live in the neglect of so great a Commandment, as this of secret prayer is?

3. *This Reprooveth those that instead of praying in secret are sinning in secret.* The Apostle saith, it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of some in secret, *Eph. 5. 12.* How do wretched sinners bless themselves, if they can slip out of the sight of men: especially as to that iniquity of which it is said, *that the abhorres of the Lord shall fall into it.* They commit Adultery, and other sorts of unclean abominations in secret places: or they live in secret self-pollution, which is commonly the young mans sin; and are condemned in the Scripture under the name of *uncleanness*, and sometimes under the Name of *Effeminacy*; and the word of the Lord saith, *that whoever liveth in it, shall certainly be ex-*

excluded out of the Kingdome of Heaven. In-  
stead of mourning and bleeding in secret places  
that ever thou hast been guilty of this sin, dost  
thou still live in it? then woe to thy soul. There  
are two things which I am sure thou dost not re-  
member as thou shouldst do.

1. Thou dost not remember that the all-seeing  
eye of an infinite God looketh upon thee. If a  
child of seven years old saw thee, thou wouldst  
be afraid and ashamed to commit that sin; and  
wouldst thou do it, if thou didst behold God  
looking on thee?

2. Neither dost thou remember the day of  
judgment. For then every secret thing whe-  
ther it be good or whether it be evil  
shall be brought to light. *Eccles. 12. 14.* If  
thou didst believe that all the world should one  
day hear of this secret sin of thine, wouldst  
thou commit it? certainly if men considered  
this they would sin in secret less, and pray in se-  
cret more.

Use 2. Of Exhortation, to follow the Apostles  
Example, by bring much in the practise of this duty  
of secret Prayer.

Do but consider, the good and benefit which  
will follow. Whosoever is sincere therein shall  
find that his secret prayers have not been lost  
labour. A man may thereby obtain mercy for  
his own soul: even graces and spiritual blessings.

Solo:

*Solomon's* wisdom was given to him as an answer unto his secret prayers. Comfort and assurance of Gods favour may in this way be obtained: you that complain, you have not as yet seen of your salvation, consider of it. There have been those (I could tell you of marvellous instances to this purpose) that when they have been upon their knees in secret, the holy Spirit hath broke in upon their Souls with everlasting consolation. Yea, a man by secret Prayer may obtain mercy for his Family. The lives of all *Jacobs* children were spared, in answer to their Fathers prayers in secret. Nay more, one righteous man by prayer in secret, may be a means to divers Judgement, and to obtain mercy for the whole Town, and Land where he dwells. How far did *Abraham* by his prayers in secret prevail for *Sodom*; and *Moses* for *Israel*? And what mercy did *Elipah* and *Amos* obtain for the whole Land by their secret prayers?

And truly they are the persons who are like to experience special mercy in the evil day. They, that pray much in secret, and that mourn continually, in secret places, because of the sins of the times, shall experience the temporal (that which is better) spiritual preservations in a day of general calamity. *Ezek. 9. 1.*

*Jer. 48. 17.*

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Men

Men should in secret before the Lord, often bewail every sin they have been guilty of, whilst in a state of unrepentancy. As to the kind of sin, that is, though it may be the acts of sin have been so often iterated, as 'tis not possible to mention them all particularly) And if after conversion they fall into evils, for which Conscience condemn them, they should particularly acknowledge those sins in their secret addresses up to the throne of Grace, begging for the pardon of them. Particular plagues of heart should be mourned for in secret: so there are particular mercies to be prayed for; and particular friends (near Relations especially) which ought to be remembered in secret prayers day and night without ceasing. Personal and particular concern are to be enlarged upon in closer prayer especially.

2. *Take heed of resting in the external performance of this duty.* Do not think that you must needs be saved, merely because you pray in secret. You especially, who are the Children of godly Parents, and have ever practised this duty, because of the frequent Exhortations, and Examples which have been set before you. Oh rest not here, without experiencing a work of true Faith and Regeneration in your Souls. Remember, that though a man cannot be sincere, if he live in the neglect of so great a duty, yet he may continue in the practice of it, after a formal manner

manner (as Paul before his conversion did, *Phil.* 3. 6. *Luk.* 18. 4. and for all that, remain in a state of Hypocrisie. Nor indeed is there any duty, but an Hypocrite may attend it without ceasing, as to the external part of the duty. Wherefore, beware of taking up with that.

3. *Labour after intimacy of Communion with God therein.* Its true, we must remember our distance, considering that God is in Heaven, and we are on Earth. He is an infinite Majesty, and we are poor inconsiderable dust-heaps; and therefore may not forget that we are dust and ashes, when we take upon us to speak unto the Lord of heaven and earth. Nevertheless he alloweth us to be humbly familiar with his divine Majesty. An holy man upon his deathbed could say, *If the walls of this chamber could speak, they would testify: how often I have met with God here; and how familiar he hath been with my soul.* Oh labour after that, to know by blessed experience, what it is to have intimate communion with God in closets, and to be familiar with the Lord Jesus there.

4. *Propose other duties in secret, which are an help to Prayer.* e. g. Self-examination is a great help unto secret prayer. When a man upon examination and serious reflections upon himself, seeth what his defects have been and are; and withal perceiveth what God hath done for his soul, he must needs thereby be quickened in his calling



*will pray with their Families.*

65

upon the Name of the Lord. And read the Scriptures daily in secret; and having so done, meditate and ponder upon what you have read; and then fall upon your knees before the Lord, and pour out your very hearts in his presence. And know for your encouragement that your secret prayers shall one day be rewarded openly *Mat. 6. 6.* When you come to die, you will not repent of the time that hath been thus spent, nor at the last day when the Lord Jesus will openly before all the World speak of the secret Prayers (as well as secret Acts & deeds) of his servants. O how glorious will it be, when Christ shall say (as sometimes to *Nathaniel*) I saw thee every day and night upon thy knees in thy closet; I bestowed mercy on others out of respect to thy prayers, and brought about great changes in the world, in answer thereunto? *Blissed is that Servant whom the Lord shall find thus doing.*

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*Baptized*



*Baptised Persons are under Sacred and Awful  
Obligation to the Lord.*

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*GAL. 3. 27.*

*For as many of you, as have been Baptised into  
Christ, have put on Christ.*

**T**He Apostle having declared that men are justified only by Faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law, he doth obviate and answer some objections, which certain self-teachers who troubled the Churches in *Galatia*, after *Paul's* departure from amongst them; would be ready to make: one of which was, that then ~~the law~~ was an useless thing; and that if life could not be obtained thereby, it was given in vain to the children of *Israel*. He therefore sheweth, that the Law was of great use. 1. To convince of sin, *ver. 19.* 2. To lead unto Christ *ver. 24.* The moral Law doth convince of sin; and

and so help men to a sight of their need of a Saviour: but especially, the Ceremonial Law, was a Schoolmaster to lead unto Christ. All the Ceremonies did one way or other point at Christ. Every Sacrifice told the Jews that they deserved Death; and that if ever they were saved from eternal death it must be by the Blood of Christ.

Having cleared the Truth, and given a satisfactory Answer unto Objections proposed; he proceeds further to confirm his Assertion, that the Ceremonial Law is abrogated, and that Believers are not now bound to observe it. And this he proveth from the consideration of their Adoption, *ver. 26*. It is true, that Old Testament Believers, though under the Law, were nevertheless the Children of God. But they were like Children in minority, who are under Schoolmasters; whereas now Believers are like Children come to Adult age, that need the help of a School master no longer. A Child in minority, though his Fathers Heir, is under Tutors and Governours; but Children grown up to Maturity are not so. Thus the Church before the coming of Christ was in its minority, and therefore might be under such a severe and grievous School-master as the Law was: But now the Church being come to greater perfection, is not so. Believers under the Gospel are to be esteemed as the Adopted Children of God; and that

not as Children under age, but fit for the enjoyment of high privileges. And that is evinced in this verse from the consideration of that Baptisme into the Name of Christ, which his Servants are the Subjects of. The, that are incorporated into Christ, and made one with him; must needs be the Children of God. So are you (saith the Apostle) witness your Baptisme. Men may be said to *put on Christ*:

1. When they have an interest in him, and in his glorious Righteousness, as a garment to adorn their Souls.

2. When they imitate his graces, have received his Spirit, and follow his Example. Not that all Baptised persons do thus really; but they are all under the deepest and most sacred and solemn obligation so to do. They professedly put on Christ. They are under engagement by their Baptisme to look after Salvation from Christ, and to obey him in all things, to follow him as the Captain of their Salvation.

The *Doctrine* which may therefore be insisted on from these Words, is;

*That Baptisme doth bring those that are Baptised under Sacred, and most Awful Obligations to the Lord.*

There are two things that may be enquired into for the clearing of this Doctrine:

1. How it doth appear that Baptised persons are

are under sacred and awful Obligations to the Lord?

2. What those Obligations are or, what things Baptisme doth oblige the Subjects of it unto?

Q. How doth it appear that Baptised persons are under Obligations to the Lord?

Ans. 1. The truth of this Doctrine is evident, in that Baptisme is a sign and seal of that Covenant which God hath through Jesus Christ, graciously established with the children of men.

It hath seemed good to the wisdom of God, to appoint some visible signs, to be for tokens and intimations of the Covenant which is between himself and his people. When he made a Covenant with Abraham, he did institute that ordinance of Circumcision, to be for a sign of the Covenant? Gen. 17. 11. Hence we read of the Covenant of Circumcision, Act 7. 8. because the Subjects of that Ordinance, did by their submission thereunto; declare and testify that they became the Lords Covenant servants. The New Testament hath only two Seals or Sacraments annexed to it; the first of which is Baptisme. Hence the Apostle in 1 Pet. 3. 21. speaking of Baptisme, he speaketh also of the Answer of a good Conscience, which expression alludeth unto Stipulation or Covenanting with God, implying that in Baptisme, men do come under a sacred Obligation to be the Lords. When it is propounded

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pounded to a man, wilt thou promise to be the servant of God, and of Jesus Christ? if he answers again, I will be so and doth make this promise in sincerity, that's the answer of a good Conscience, and then his *Baptisme* doth (as a sign and seal of the Covenant) save him. The Covenant a one binds unto duty: but when sealed, that addeth to the Obligation. The Lord is made the stronger thereby.

2. *Baptisme is an holy Privilege.* That which only *Lords* have a right unto; viz. Those that are amongst the number of the Lords visible people. Baptisme doth of right belong unto all and only such. To Christs Disciples, *Joh 4. 1.* To Believers, or such as do visibly belong unto Jesus Christ, as his sheep, or as his lambs, *Mark 16. 16.* It is the mark and livery whereby Christs Servants are distinguished from those that worship other Gods. We know that amongst men, the Servants belonging to great personages, use to wear such a *Livery*, by which *Cognizance*, they are known to be the Servants of such a Master. And the Lord Christ hath commanded that Baptisme shall be the *Livery*, whereby his Servants shall be distinguished from others in the world. Now priviledges are alwayes attended with obligations unto duty. Inasmuch then, as Baptisme is an holy priviledge, it leaveth a deep Obligation upon the souls of those who are made the Subjects of it that they approve themselves in all respects as becometh the Lords Servants to do.

3. *Glorious things are signified and sealed by Baptisme.* e.g. Union with Christ As that expression in the Text, of being *Baptized into Christ* doth import, our incorporation into *Christs mystical body*, is signified by *Baptisme*. There is an *external Union* with Christ, which all the Lords visible Covenant people are concerned in. Hence we read of *branches in him*, which do not bear fruit, *Job. 15. 2.* Men and women who are Members of the visible, but not of the invisible Church and body of Christ, are such; and his external union and relation unto the Lord Christ is by Baptisme sealed unto all who are by divine institution the subjects of that ordinance. There is also, a real saving union with him, which is sealed to the true believer in Baptisme. As surely as he hath been Baptised, so certain is it, that he is become one with Christ. Also, communion with Christ in respect of his death and resurrection, is thereby signified and sealed, as the Apostle sheweth, *Rom. 6. 3, 4.* *Know ye not that so many of us, as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death, therefore we are buried with him, by baptisme into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.* When water is put upon the person Baptised, thats a sign of his communion with Christ in respect of His death and burial, and when he is brought from under the water again, thats a sign of his Communion with Christ in respect of

his Resurrection. And hence, Baptisme doth signifie unto Believers that Communion which they have with Christ in respect of all the saving benefits procured by his death, and by his resurrection, *1 Pet. 3. 21. Baptisme doth save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*; it is unto us a Sacrament, signifying that we are saved through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Justification* by the righteousness of Christ is held forth thereby. And so indeed *Circumcision* did declare that Justification was to be obtained through Faith in the Righteousness of Christ. For which cause the Scripture saith that it was a *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, *Rom. 4. 11*. The remission of sins is signified by baptisme, *Mark 1. 4. Act. 2. 38*. Therefore *Ananias* said unto *Paul* *Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins Act. 22. 16*. Baptisme doth intimate, that the guilt of sin is washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. *Sanctification* is likewise signified thereby. It is therefore said that the Lord did *sanctifie and cleanse his Church with the washing of water*, *Eph. 5. 26*. When the body is subjected unto water in Baptisme, those *pure waters* of the Spirit of Grace, wherewith the souls of Gods Elect are sprinkled and washed from the filth of sin, are thereby signified. Yea, and *Glorification* is thereby assured unto the true Believer in Christ, that he is admitted into the number of Gods adopted Child'ren; and therefore is become an Heir of that Kingdome which doth belong unto the children



children of God. All these mysteries are signified and sealed unto sincere Christians positively by their Baptisme; and unto all that are baptised conditionally, h. e. in case they do repent and believe. Now if such glorious things are signified and sealed by Baptisme, the Souls of men must needs be brought under, a deep and holy Obligation unto the Lord thereby.

4. *The dreadful Name of God, is put upon those that are Baptised.* Therefore they are said to be Baptised, not only *in*, but ( *24* To onoma ) *into* the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, *Mat.* 28. 19. because the Name of the only true God, who is Father Son, and Spirit; is put upon them. Which expression, doth imply, that baptised persons, are adopted into Gods Family; and that therefore they are bound to walk worthy of that great and holy Name which is put upon them. Men are also baptised *into* the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Act.* 8. 16. & 19. 5. according to the *Hebrew* stile, to be *Baptised into the Name* of another, is to become wholly devoted unto his service; and to yield ones self in all things to his direction. Thus Baptised persons, are devoted and dedicated unto the peculiar service of God, and of Jesus Christ, who is become *their Lord*; and therefore they are under engagement to acquit themselves accordingly. The consecration of God being upon them, they must needs be under

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great

great Obligations unto Duty.

We come therefore unto the second enquiry, *viz. What things Baptisme doth oblige the Subjects of it unto?*

*Ans. 1. Baptisme doth oblige unto Faith in God, and in Jesus Christ.*

The subjects of it, are bound to believe in that only true God, into whose alone Name they have been baptised. It doth oblige not only unto an Historical Faith, or to believe that every word of God is true; but unto a Faith of adherence and dependance upon God for life and Salvation; and this as to every one of the persons in the Sacred Trinity, according to their distinct personal Relations. We are (as a judicious and excellent Preacher well expresseth) obliged by our Baptisme to depend upon God the Father, as the Fountain of all our good, and allsufficient happiness, and to rest upon the Son of God, as our Redeemer, expecting life and salvation through his merit and mediation, and to believe in God the Holy Ghost, as our Sanctifier, Comforter and Guide in the way to Glory.

*2. All Baptised Persons are obliged by their Baptisme, to make an open Profession of the Name of God in Christ, though exposed to never such hazards and onward miseries on account thereof. It obligeth us, not to be ashamed of our Religion, and holy profession; but to be willing that the whole world should see and know, that we are the ser-*  
vants

wants of the only true God, and of his Son Jesus Christ. It is noted concerning the Lords Sealed ones, that they had the *Fathers Name* written in their Foreheads. Rev. 14. 1. These are thereby in ended, who make a bold and open profession of the Name, and pure Worship of God, during the reign of Antichrist; notwithstanding their being exposed to dangers and sufferings on that account. It is not enough for me, to believe that there is one God distinguished into three persons; or that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; but they must openly confess the Name of *et* is God in Christ, owning themselves to be his Servants, whatever the event of such a profession, as to sufferings in the world, may be. Now by Baptisme men do thus. Hence it is said, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved*, h. e. he that doth both inwardly and sincerely believe on Christ, and that shall by his submitting to Baptisme, declare before all the World, that he is a Believer on Christ, is one unto whom the Gospel doth promise Salvation. And indeed, in these times of persecution, if a man did subject himself to that *Institution* of Christ, it was a great sign of his being a true Believer, inasmuch as he did thereby expose himself to all sorts of dangers and miseries from the world, for Christs sake. For then, if a man did consent to be Baptised into the Name of Christ; immediately his Estate, Liberty, Life,

and all was in danger to be taken from him.

3. *Baptised persons, are bound to renounce, disown, and forsake those things which would keep them from serving God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*  
 e. g. They are under solemn engagement to renounce all Idols; to serve them no longer, for thats inconsistent with being the Lords servant. The Gentiles before their Conversion, did service unto them which by nature are no Gods, Gal. 4. 8. but when they had submitted unto Baptisme, they were under the strongest obligation that could be, never to serve *Idols* any more nor to worship any one, besides that God who is Father, Son and Spirit. And they are bound to forsake the service of sin, and not to live under the dominion thereof, Rom. 6. 2, 3. *Shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? so many of us as were baptised, &c.* The Apostle doth not affirm, that it is impossible for men that are in respect of their Baptisme professedly dead unto sin, to live therein; but that it is very unsuitable for them so to do; and that they are under the greatest and most sacred obligations to the contrary. And hence another Apostle speaketh, as 2 *Per. 1. 9.* *He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.* Which words may well allude unto baptisme, importing that men by subjecting thereunto, profess and engage unto God, that they will forsake their sins & former evil wayes, and walk no more therein, Also the baptised person

person doth renounce the *World*, so far as it stands in opposition to *Christ*. He is under engagement not to be (in spiritual respects and as to matters of Faith and Soul-concernments) the servant of any man in the world, *1 Cor. 7. 23.* And therefore he may not call himself after the name of this or that *Self-master*, as *Papists* are wont to do, who call themselves, *Scotists*, or *Thomasts*, or *Dominicans*, or *Franciscans*, &c. This is directly against the Scripture, and against that obligation which Baptisme brings men under, by which whosoever *baptised persons*, are, only after the Name of *Christ*, to call themselves *Christians*. Had the *Corinthians*, called themselves *Paulites*, or *Petrites*, or *Apolonists*, after the Names of those famous Ministers of *Christ*, they had greatly sinned against their baptisme, *1 Cor. 1. 13.* Yea, and the baptised person is bound to forsake all vain, worldly Comparisons, so far as society with them, is an hindrance to communion with God. And to renounce the things of the world also, *sc.* when they stand in opposition to, or competition with the things of *Christ*. If a man after he is baptised shall set his heart inordinately upon Earthly vanities, he breaketh his baptismal vow and covenant with God, *Mat. 6. 14.*

4. *Baptised ones, are under obligation to approve themselves, holy persons.* They are bound to live a sanctified life. If they have been washed with the

holy water of Baptisme, that signifie h to them that now they must approve themselves, as those that have the consecration of God upon them ought to do, in all holy conversation and godliness, *Eph. 5. 26.* They are now bound to live, as becomes the Servants of such an *Holy Lord*, as God is, and as Christ is, for to do. There are two things in Sanctification; unto both which Baptisme doth in the most tolemn manner oblige those that are the Subjects of it.

1. To mortifie sin. The baptized person hath vowed the death of sin, and that he will never be reconciled to that Enemy, but will maintain war with the *Amalekites* for ever. As Christ hath died for sin, so the person that is baptized in o his Name, is under a most sacred Obligation, to endeavour to be continually dying to sin, *Rom. 6. 3.*

2. Another thing in Sanctification, is *Vivification*, or the living a new life to the honour of God. Thus the baptized person, is under the most solemn engagement unto new obedience, to *walk in newness of life*. As Christ rose out of his Grave, and liveth for ever to the glory of the Father, so baptized persons are under engagement, to rise more and more out of the grave of sin, and to live such a life as that God may have glory from them, *Rom. 6. 4, 5.* In Baptisme, there is an intimation, that the subjects of it, are professedly and visibly new creatures; and that there;

therefore they are bound to live like new creatures, *Tis. 3. 5.* Hence in the primitive times, *baptised persons* had the name of *regenerate ones* given to them, because they were under obligation not to live to themselves or to the world, but unto God and unto Jesus Christ. They are bound to live a new and another kind of life, than that which unregenerate sinners are acquainted with. Hence is that expression in the Scripture of *baptizing unto Repentance*, *Mat. 3. 11* because the subjects of that ordinance are bound to repent, *i. e.* to forsake the ways of sin, and to walk in the contrary ways of holiness.

5. *Baptised persons are under obligation to observe all the holy Institutions of the Lord Jesus.* As the subjects of circumcision were bound to observe all Mosical Laws and Ceremonies, *Gal. 5. 3.* So are baptised ones to attend unto all the Institutions of Christ. When the Lord saith unto his Ministers, *Baptise persons, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you*, *Mat. 28. 19. 20.* That plainly sheweth, that such are by virtue of their baptism, under a religious obligation, to observe whatever the Lord hath commanded. Yea, and that expression of being *baptised into his Name*, doth imply no less. Therefore whatever hath the Name of Christ upon it, is to be duly respected, and so have all his institutions. And if any of these be rejected or neglected, the Name and Authority of Christ, is so

so far disowned, which is a direct violation of that which baptism requireth.

6. *Baptisme doth oblige Christians unto unity amongst themselves.* It is a Seal of that spiritual union which believers have, both with Christ, and also through Christ, one with another. 1 Cor 12. 13. *We are all baptised into one body.* It doth declare the Subjects of it, to be servants belonging to the same Master: and that therefore they ought to be at unity amongst themselves. Hence the Apostle useh that Argument to perswade Christians to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, because there is *one baptism*, Eph. 4. 5. They are all baptised into one and the same Name, dedicated and devoted to be the Servants of one and the same Lord Jesus. Therefore bound to be and continue one amongst themselves; and to beware how they make a Schisme in the body, or amongst the members of Christ.

7. *Baptisme doth oblige men unto constancy in the way of obedience.* It is an everlasting bond. *A mark of the Lord*, which leaveth an eternal obligation unto duty upon the Souls of men. The Covenant is perpetual, Jer. 50. 5. *Let us jynour selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, which shall not be forgotten.* The Covenant is everlasting. Isai. 24. 5. *They have broken the everlasting Covenant*, i. e. that Covenant which ought never to have been broken by them. There;



Therefore Baptisme confirming the Covenant, carrieth with it the force of an everlasting obligation. The person that is baptised, is bound to serve God not for a while only, but for ever. He is bound to hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering. He is bound to practise (as well as to profess) the thing that good is, all his days. He is bound to continue in his observing of divine Institutions, he is under obligation to be constant in his love to Saints, and to the Truths, and Worship, and Ordinances of God, even to the end of his days.

*Use. 1. Here is matter of Conviction and Awakening unto those that rest in external baptisme, without coming up to that which they are obliged unto.*

Alas! there are many that do thus: yea, as for the generality of baptised persons, this is sadly true concerning them. How few are there, that ever had serious thoughts with themselves, about this matter? If they and their Children may be baptised, they look no further, as if that were all that the Lord requireth of them. And hence it is, that many who are unholy and profane, having no right to baptisme in sight of God nor of men, neither for themselves nor for their Children, are very desirous to have that ordinance administered to them; it is partly for that they suppose *the reproach of Egypt will then be rolled*

rolled away from them: it being esteemed a dishonourable thing to be un-baptised, where the name of a Christian is in creet with the world: but chiefly, because they are not aware of that dreadful Obligation which their Souls are brought under by baptisme; and the anathing curse of Heaven, that will at last most certainly come upon them, if they violate their *baptismal Vow and Engagement* unto the Lord.

I desire and solemnly charge such persons as in the fear of God, to consider of two things.

1. *That external baptisme alone will not save them.* Will you say of your baptisme, as the Israelites said of the Ark? *It shall save us*, 1 Sam. 4. 3. O deceive not your own Souls. The Apostle having said, *baptisme now saveth us*, hat no one might mistake his meaning, he adds, *not the putting away the filth of the flesh*, not (saith he) a meer external washing of the body, but there must be *the answer of a good Conscience*, you must make Conscience, to answer the Obligation, which baptisme hath brought you under, or it will be no sign of Salvation to your Souls, 1 Pet. 3. 21. *you shall be as far off from Salvation as if you had never been baptised*, if you rest there 1 Cor. 7. 19. *Circumcision is nothing but the keeping of the Commandments of God.* So baptisme is nothing, if there be not that care to keep the Commandments of God, which baptisme obligeth unto, Rom. 2. 25. *For Circumcision verily*

profiteth if thou keep the Law, but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy Circumcision is made uncircumcision. So I say, thy baptism will profit thee, if thou dost remember the awful obligation, which thy Soul is brought under thereby; but if thou shalt be unminifful of thy engagement to be the Lords, thy baptism is made ro bapti me, as to any spiritual and eternal benefit, to be from thence expected. Is it not said, concerning the Children of *Israel*, that they were all baptised in the Cloud, and yet with many of them God was not well pleased, 1 Cor. 10. 2, 3. Outward baptism alone, will make no man, woman, nor child, acceptable unto God.

2. Baptisme will be so far from saving, as that it will tend to the aggravation of their eternal condemnation at the last day, that do not remember how they have thereby been engaged to be the Lords.

They have prophaned the Covenant, and taken the dreadful Name of God in vain; therefore he will not hold them guiltless. They will one day wish that they had never been baptised, Eccles. 5. 5. better it is that thou shouldest not vow, then that thou shouldest vow and not pay. So it were better for thee not to be baptised, then that thou shouldest be baptised, and yet not be mindfull of that baptismal vow which thy Soul is under; for thou wilt receive the greater damnation. The water of baptism will be turned into blood: Think awfully on that Scripture, Jer. 9.

25. 26. behold the dayes come, saith the Lord, that I will punish the circumcised with the uncircumcised: Egypt, and Judah, and Edom &c for all those Nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart. Even so, God will punish not only Heathen, and Jews, and Turks, and Indians; for all these are unbaptised, but also professed Christian, yea, protestant people, for these are generally *unbaptised in heart*; their heart is not washed from their filthiness. It shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of Judgement, then for impenitent baptised persons. Consider this you that are unbaptised in heart. Your baptism will rise up in Judgement against you at the last day. 't is reported concerning a man, whose name was *Elpidophorus* that after his baptism Ap-stasing from the truth & wayes of God; the Minister who had administered that Ordinance to him shewed him the vestment wherein he had been baptised saying this shall accuse thee at the last day: so I say to thee, the place where thou wast baptised, and the Minister of God, that baptised thee, will be a witness against thee at the last day, if thou dost not live and practise according to that sacred obligation which thy soul is under.

Use 2. Let those that have been baptised into Christ; be exhorted in the Name of the Lord this day, to improve their baptism.

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Consider, they are blessed that do thus. They that answer the obligation which by being made subject unto such an Ordinance of Christ, they are brought under, shall have all the grace and good which is signified thereby, most certainly performed to them. All that is contained in that comprehensive word, *Salvation*, shall be vouchsafed to them, *1 Pet. 3. 21*. As sure as they have been baptised, so surely shall they be saved with an everlasting Salvation. They that have the *inward* as well as *outward Baptisme*, have really put on Christ, who will be a blessed Garment, to hide their nakedness, and cover their shame, a glorious Robe, to adorn their Souls with. The *Wedding Garment*, the righteousness of Justification and of Sanctification is theirs.

*Q. How should Baptisme be improved? unto what ends should we make use of our Christian Baptisme?*

*Ans.* In general unto all those ends which the Lord hath appointed it for. We are to improve our Baptisme for our help and furtherance in those things, which that Ordinance doth put us in mind of. Concerning the obligations, which Christians are brought under thereby, we have already spoken. Let me here add.

1. *That Baptisme should be improved unto unfeigned Humiliation in the Lords sight.* For it puts us in mind of our natural defilement by sin. That our Souls need to be washed, in the Blood,

and by the Spirit of Christ. And when we see Baptisme administered unto any; we should humbly, and with an holy shame reflect upon our selves, in that we have lived no more according to that *baptismal Engagement* to be the Lords, and his only, which we should most frequently remember and consider, that so we might thereby be retrained from sin, and quickened unto duty.

2. *Baptisme should be improved unto thankfulness and admiration at the grace of God in Christ Jesus.* How wonderful, is that Grace, that such as we are, should be of the Lords Family? That the mark appertaining to his sheep should be set upon us; and that our Children with us, have been solemnly owned as visibly belonging to God and to Jesus Christ, having the *mark of his lambs* on them! That Christ should put in for our Children in the first place, and by commanding his mark to be set upon them, bring them under engagement to be the Lords, before ever the Devil hath had any opportunity to tempt them unto sin. O we should admire this Grace of God.

3. *We should improve our baptism as an help against Temptation.* If tempted unto any wickedness, we should remember that we are *Baptised into Christ*, and therefore may not sin against him. I have read of a godly person, that when tempted unto that which was evil in the sight of God,

God, would reply and repel the Temptation, by saying, *Nay, Satan, I may not, I dare not do such thing, because I have been baptised in the Name of Christ.* If we be at any time tempted to despair of Gods mercy; we should then think of our baptism. *Luther* said, that when he was molested with temptations of that nature, he used to consider with himself *Baptizatus sum & credo in crucifixum*, I am baptised, and I believe in him that was crucified, so would the temptation vanish. In drowning times when our souls are ready to sink under discouragements, we should remember and improve our baptism, considering that thereby our rising from under the waters of affliction, (as well as the Resurrection of our bodies out of the grave) is signified and sealed, *1 Pet. 3.20, 21.* Therefore:

4. *Baptism should be improved as an encouragement unto Faith and Prayer.* Believers should from the consideration thereof, take heart; and not only pray, but Believe sin to death; and that they shall be made more and more holy, and enabled to live to God, inasmuch as Communion with Christ, in respect of his death and resurrection, hath been sealed and confirmed to them in baptism. Go before the Lord in secret, and say, Lord, hath not Christ dyed that so his servants might die to sin; and is he not risen, that they might live unto God? Hath not communion with him in respect of the benefits procured

by his death and resurrection been sealed by my Baptisme? O then, let me become more and more dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ.

And baptisme, should be improved as an encouragement unto Parents to believe as well as Pray for their Children, that God will circumcise their hearts, making them partakers of the washing of Regeneration, that as water hath been poured on their bodies in the Name of Christ so converting grace shall be poured down from Heaven upon their Souls. And Children who have been baptised into Christ, should from that consideration, be encouraged to pray for Grace. Children hearken to this word. O let not your baptisme ly by you, as a useless thing: Go to th<sup>e</sup> Lor<sup>d</sup>, and say, Lord, thou art a God in Covenant with my Father, and with my Mother, and with me also; hast not thou promised to give a new heart to the house of Israel; and to sprinkle thy Holy Spirit on them? Am not I of the house of Israel? hath not this promise been sealed to me in my Baptisme? O then give me a new heart. And if you thus seek unto him earnestly and sincerely; *the Lord will be found of you.*





*The Lords Supper is an Ordinance which Believers are under an indispensable Obligation to Observe.*

I COR. 11. 25.

*This do ye.*

**I**N this Context, the Apost<sup>le</sup> taketh notice of some abuses and profanations, which the *Corinthians* were guilty of, with respect unto that sacred Ordinance of the Lords Supper. And in order to a Reformation thereof, he puts them in mind of, and endeavours to reduce them unto the Primitive Institution.

In this, with the two preceding verses, the Apostle declareth what Christ did and said; at the time when he first instituted, and administered the Lords Supper; as also the principal end for which that Ordinance was ordained, *sc.* to be a

118 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

commemoration of the death of Christ, and so of the Redemption purchased thereby.

In the words before us to insist on, we have,

1. The duty commanded, *This do*, h. e. the bread being according to Christs Institution, blessed and broken, take and eat thereof; and the cup being also consecrated, take and drink thereof; This is that which is to be done: in other words, it is as much as if it were said, see that you religiously observe and celebrate the Lords Supper, according to divine institution.

2. We have the persons, immediately concerned in this command: *Ye*, h. e. you that are the Disciples of Christ, you that are Believers, and able to discern the Lords Body.

*Doct. That the Lords Supper is an Ordinance, which Believers are under an indispensable Obligation to observe.*

There are three things which may here be enquired into. 1. What the Lords Supper is? 2. Who are meet subjects to partake of that Ordinance. 3. The Reason why Believers should do this.

Q. 1. *What is the Lords Supper?*

A. 1. *The Lords Supper is the last Sacrament of the New Testament.*

There are three particulars contained in this  
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Proposition, which may be distinctly spoken unto and proved.

1. That the Lords Supper is a Sacrament.
2. A Sacrament of the New Testament.
3. The last Sacrament thereof.

1. *It is a Sacrament.* When spiritual mysteries are represented by outward signs, thats a Sacrament: so it is here. In every Sacrament there is an outward and an inward part: a carnal and a spiritual part, something that is visible and sensible, and something that is not apprehended by the outward senses, which only the soul seeth, and an eye of faith looketh upon; on the outward sign and the thing signified. If inward Grace be signified by outward signs, thats a Sacrament. Thus in the Ordinance of the Lords Supper, there are outward Elements and Sacramental Actions, all which have a spiritual significancy with them.

1. Bread and Wine are the outward Elements which by the sacred appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ are to be made use of, in that holy institution of his; as is expressly declared in this Context. So in the Gospel we read how Christ blessed Bread, &c. *Mat. 26. 26.* And the Cup, *ver. 27, 28. this cup, h. e. the wine in this cup.* That it was Wine and nothing else which that sacred cup contained, is evident from *verse 29.* where it was called the *fruit of the Vine.* Now as for the *Bread*, which the Lord Christ, hath charged

charged his Disciples to feed upon in this Ordinance, thereby his *Body* is signified, so did the Lord himself declare at the time when he commanded this service to be religiously attended. *This is my Body*, h. e. it is so Sacramentally. It is necessary that we should know and believe, that the words are figurative, and not to be taken in a proper sense; as if the Bread were Christs real Body, or as if Bread were real Flesh, which is impossible. Figures are frequently used in Sacramental phrases in the Scripture; the sign being called by the Name of the thing signified thereby. It is said of Circumcision, *this is my Covenant*, h. e. a sign thereof, Gen. 17. 10. And the Lamb is called *the Lords Passover*, Exod. 12. 10. And the Apostle speaking of that rock whose waters followed the Children of Israel, saith, *that rock was Christ*; meaning that Christ was thereby signified, 1 Cor. 10. 4. so is the Bread in the Sacrament called the *Body of Christ*, because that is signified thereby. As for the Wine, which the Lord Christ hath charged his Disciples to drink of in remembrance of him, his *Blood* is signified thereby. And there is, in many respects, an resemblance between the sign and the thing signified; more especially as to the Wine made in the Land of Canaan, which is called the *blood of the Grape*. Deut. 32. 14. because of its red colour, resembling blood.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, hath shewed his

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wonderful wisdom and goodness, in choosing such common Elements, which may easily be obtained, so far as the necessity of such an Ordinance doth require. Had the Lord appointed a rare and sumptuous Feast to be frequently observed, unto the honour of his Name: and as a memorial & means of Communion with himself, many of his poor Members must needs have gone without it: but it is not so now & there is an aptness in these Elements, to signify that which they are intended for. *Bread*, which doth strengthen and nourish the body, doth aptly set forth that spiritual nourishment which we have from Christ. And *Wine* which doth refresh the Spirits of men, it fitly made use of, to put in mind, of that refreshing which the Souls of Believers find in the blood of Christ.

2. Those Sacramental Actions, which the Lord hath commanded his Servants to observe, in partaking at his Table, have also a spiritual significancy with them. These are implied in the Text, being comprehended under this expression, *Do this*, i.e. as you must make use of such Elements, so of such Sacramental Actions, as are of the Lords Institution. There is not any Action relating to this Ordinance; but hath a spiritual mystery in it. The Sacramental actions are: 1. Taking. 2. Blessing. 3. Breaking. 4. Giving. 5. Receiving. 6. Eating and Drinking.

1. Taking.

122 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

1. *Taking*, as here *ver. 23*. Christ *took bread*, and he *took the cup*. That sacramental action, signifieth to us, that the Son of God hath taken our nature in to personal union with himself, *Heb. 2. 14*. It puts us in mind of that great mystery of godliness God manifest in the flesh. Even the incarnation of the Son of God, and the personal Union of the Humane Nature with the Divine.

2. *Blessing*, *Mat. 26. 26*. *Jesus took bread and blessed it*. He also blessed the Cup. Therefore the Apostle speaketh, as *1 Cor. 10. 16*. *The Cup of blessing which we bless*. Thereby the consecration of the Elements, is intimated. They are to be solemnly set apart, from a common unto a sacred and Religious use. Thus hath Christ been consecrated and set a part unto the work and office of a Mediator, *Heb. 7. 28*. God hath set him apart thereunto, *Psal. 4. 3*. And Christ hath set himself apart for that service. Therefore he speaketh, as in *Joh. 17. 19*. *For their sakes I sanctifie my self*. As a Sacrifice was set apart from a common use, and consecrated to the Lords use; so did Christ sanctifie himself, and became a sacrifice unto divine Justice, for his peoples sake.

3. *Breaking the bread*, *Mark 14. 22*. *Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it*. Hence the Apostle speaketh, as *1 Cor. 10. 16*. *the bread which we brake is is not the Communion of the body of Christ,*

**Christ.** The Antichristian Church (and some others also) do greatly sin against the Institution of Christ in omitting the rite of *breaking the bread*, in this Ordinance. For it is so essential unto his regular administration of it, as that the whole ordinance is sometime in the Scripture, denominated from that action. *1 Cor. 10. 16. & 2. 42.* That signified, that Christ hath been broken for the sins of his people: the Lord therefore said, *This is my body which was broken for you.* He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, it pleased the Lord to bruise him and to put him to grief, *Isa. 53. 5. 6.* He was bruised to death upon the Cross: yea, and his very Soul was broken with the sense of the wrath of God, due for the sins of his people: therefore did he say, *my Soul is sorrowful unto the death.* The breaking of the bread in the Sacrament puts us in mind of those sufferings which the Body (i. e. the Humane Nature) of Christ was subject unto.

4. *Giving*, That Sacramental action is mentioned by the Evangelists, though it be not expressed by the Apostle in this Context. Christ gave the blessed bread, and the blessed cup to his Disciples. Thereby is signified, the Lords giving himself to and for his Church. So it is expressed and explained, *Luk. 22. 19. He gave to them saying, this is my body which is given for you. Also this giving declareth that God hath given Christ*

424 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

Christ to and for his people. In and by this Ordinance, the Lord speaketh unto the Believer after this manner, Thou seest bread provided for thee, even so have I provided a Saviour for thy Soul. Behold! I have sent Christ to thee, saith the Lord, Take my Son for thy Saviour. I give him freely to thee. Take Christ for thy own, and let thy Soul now take everlasting hold on him. Therefore,

5. *Receiving*, is another Sacramental Action. Christ said *Take*, this is my body. And this *taking* is implied in the Text, when it is said, *this do*, part of the meaning is, receive the Bread, and receive the Cup, as Christ hath commanded. And thereby our receiving of Christ is signified: that we are to *take* him, for our Lord and Saviour; yea, and to be renewing our cloſure with him by Faith, that so our Souls may *take* yet stronger hold of him. At the moment when the hand taketh the bread, the heart should again receive Christ. And this Ordinance doth signify to the worthy receiver, that as surely as he doth *take bread* into his hand and mouth, so certainly doth he *take* Christ into his Soul, to become one with him.

6. *Eating and Drinking* are also Sacramental Actions to be attended at the Lords Table. Eating of *that bread*, signifieth our feeding upon a crucified Christ, by Faith, *Job. 6. 54. whose flesh hath eternal life.* Those words of Christ



Christ were spoken before the Lords Supper was Instituted, and therefore must not be restrained unto Sacramental eating. A man may feed upon Christ Sacramentally, and yet not have eternal life; But if when he feeds upon Christ Sacramentally, he doth at the same time feed upon him spiritually by Faith, *he hath eternal life.* And not only eating of the bread, but drinking of the cup is a Sacramental action.

The Papists have slain and murdered thousands for maintaining this Truth, and bearing witness against their Sacriledge in depriving the Lords People of the cup; but it is admirable to consider, that the Lord Christ, when he Instituted this Ordinance, did expressly say, *Drink ye all of it, Mat. 26. 27.* The Lord did not say, when he gave the bread, *Eat ye all of it,* (though he intended that all should eat) but *drink ye all;* because the Spirit of Christ did foresee; that some would arise in after times, denying the cup to *all* Partakers. Hereby is signified, that Believers do by Faith drink down the blood of Christ, whereby their Souls are cleansed from the guilt of sin, 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ?* Is not our Communion with Christ in respect of the saving benefits purchased by his blood, signified and confirmed when we drink of that blessed cup? it is so. And that we *all* drink of the same holy Spirit. The Apo-  
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126 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

He hath respect unto his drinking at the Lords Table, which is of divine institution, when he saith, *We have been all made to drink into one spirit,* 1 Cor. 12. 13. intimating that our Communion with Christ in respect of his holy Spirit, is signified, when we all partake of the same blessed cup. Thus we see, that the Lords Supper is a Sacrament.

2. *It is a Sacrament of the New-Testament.* For,

1. The Covenant which God hath graciously made with Believers on Christ, is hereby confirmed. The wisdom of God hath seen meet to appoint signs and seals for the confirmation of the Covenant, that is between himself, and the children of men. Under the first Covenant; that of works, made with Adam in Paradise, there were Sacraments appointed for the confirmation of it. The *Tree of Life*, was a Sacrament unto Adam, signifying to him, he should have life, if he kept the Covenant; and the *Tree of knowledge of good and evil*, did seal death unto him, in case he should break that Covenant. And the Covenant of Grace, hath under all its various manners of Administration had Seals and Sacraments annexed to it. *Sacrifices* of old were *Sacramental signs* for confirming the Covenant, *Exod* 24. 8. *Psal* 50. 5. *My saints shall have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice.* So was Circumcision, *Ab* 7. 8. And after that the *Paschever*,

*Passover*, in the room whereof the *Lords Supper* is Instituted. Therefore Christ did institute this Ordinance, at the time of the *Passover*; yea, and at the *last Passover*, which was celebrated by him; thereby signifying that this Ordinance of the *Lords Supper*, was to succeed and come in the room of that of the *Passover*. By this then the Covenant between God and his People is in the most solemn manner confirmed and asserted unto. It is so on our part. When we come to this Ordinance we do as it were take an *Oath of Fidelity* unto God, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, which indeed is the meaning of the word *Sacrament*. It is originally a *Military* word. Among the *Romans*, *Souldiers* did take an *Oath of Fidelity* to their *General*: which *Oath* they called the *Sacrament*. With them, have you taken the *Sacrament*? was as much as to say, have you taken the *Oath of Fidelity* to your *General*? Such as had taken that *Oath*, were said to be *Militia sacra*: they were under solemn engagement to be loyal to their *General*, and to persist in his service to the death. Thus, when we come to the *Lords Supper*, we do thereby profess and promise, to endeavour in all things to approve our selves the faithful servants of God, and to follow the Lord Jesus the Captain of our Salvation, and to oppose his Enemies (*Sin, Satan, and the World*) unto the death. The Lord also, doth confirm the Covenant on his part. He  
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428 *The Lords supper is an Ordinance*

saith from Heaven, to the worthy Receiver, I am  
& will be thy God for ever, and thy guide unto  
the death. God saith, I am thy Father, Christ  
saith, I am thy Redeemer, the Holy Spirit saith,  
I am thy Sanctifier, and will be thy everlasting  
Comforter. Thus the Covenant is mutually  
confirmed.

Hence 2. The Believers Right unto, and inter-  
est in those Blessings which only the new cove-  
nant makes mention of, is signified and sealed in  
this Ordinance. Christ with his saving benefits  
is a new covenant blessing. The first covenant  
said nothing of a Saviour: it is the covenant of  
Grace only, that revealeth him to the miserable  
children of men. And indeed Christ is the sub-  
stance of the new covenant. Hence is he called  
the Covenant, *Isai. 42. 6.* not only in that, he is  
the great *Patente* in that *Royal Charter* of the  
new covenant; the original Grant is to him; but  
also, because he is the sun and substance thereof.  
*Have Christ, and have All, Col. 3. 11.* But now  
Christ is exhibited in this Ordinance of the *Sup-  
per*; and the Believers right unto and everlasting  
interest in the Lord Jesus, is sealed and confir-  
med to him, when he doth partake thereof. The  
Lord saith to him, as truly As thou dost take the  
holy bread in thy hands and eat it, the blessed  
cup and drink of it, so truly is Christ with all  
his merits, righteousness and salvation thine. Eat  
him, and thou shalt live by him, *Job. 8. 57.* Re-  
mission

miffion of fins, is a new covenant blessing. *Jer.* 32. 41, 34. And it is exhibited and sealed to the worthy Receiver. in and by this Ordinance. Therefore when Christ did first *Inftitute* it, fome of the words which he fpake were thefe, *This is my blood of the New-Testament, which is shed for many for the Remiffion of fins*, *Mat.* 26. 28. As verily as a man doth receive the bread and the cup, (if he be a worthy Communicant) fo verily doth the Lord fay to him from Heaven, all thy fins are forgiven, though they have been many and great, they are all washed away in the blood of Christ. I have pardoned them all faith the Lord. When a Believer hath been at the Sacrament; he hath the pardon of all his Transgressions confirmed to him under the Seal of Heaven.

3. The Covenant of Grace as under its last and best way of Administration, is confirmed by this Ordinance of the Lords Supper. It doth declare, that all the good promised in the covenant is already obtained for the Believer. Hence the Covenant, in the dayes of the Gospel is called the *New-Testament*, because it is now under its last and so newest way of administration. Having been ratified by the death and blood of Christ the Testator, no more alterations can be made in it. Hence is that expreffion of *the blood of the everlasting Covenant*, *Heb.* 13. 20. The Covenant of Grace, not on'y as to the substance of it (for

130 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

So it was alwaies ) but as to its way and manner  
of administration, is become everlasting and  
unchangeable, because confirmed by the blood  
of Christ. So then, in *doing this* we commemorate  
the work of Redemption as accomplished  
and finished. The Sacraments of the Old Te-  
stament, signified that Redemption was to be ob-  
tained only by Jesus Christ; the Passover, and  
all the Sacrifices, declared no less, but that this  
Redemption was future. Whenas the *Lords Sup-  
per* holds forth the coming of Christ to accom-  
plish the work of Redemption, as a thing past  
and done. It sheweth that Christ is come, and  
that he hath paid the price of our Redemption  
that his blood is shed, *Mark 14 24*. This is my  
Blood of the New Testament which [is] shed for  
many. Christs blood was not actually shed, at  
the time when those words were spoken, yet in as  
much as the design of this ordinance is to signify  
that Christ hath already shed his blood, it is spo-  
ken in the present Tense. By *doing this*, we pro-  
fess that we do believe that Christ who is now in-  
deed alive, and behold he liveth for ever more,  
was dead, *1 Cor. 11. 26*. As often as ye eat this  
bread, and drink this cup, ye shew the Lords death  
until he come. And the Lord Jesus Christ saith,  
to the worthy Receiver, I have died for thee, I  
have satisfied the Justice of God for thy sins, I  
have ransomed thy life and soul from everlasting  
destruction.

which Believers ought to observe.

131

3. The Lords Supper is not only a Sacrament of the New-Testament (as hath been eined) but the last Sacrament thereof. There are only two Sacraments of the New Testament, v. z. Baptisme and the Lords Supper: We read in the Gospel, that when Christ was crucified, one of the Souldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, Joh. 19. 34. so there is the Sacrament of Water and of Blood. Thus some interpret that difficult Scripture, 1 Joh. 5. 8. There are three that bear witness on Earth, the Spirit, water, i. e. Baptisme, and Blood; i. e. the Lords Supper, and these three agree in one. The Lord by his spirit in his words also by the Sacraments of the New Testament, declareth and testifieth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, there are those three witnesses which agree in one as concurring in their Testimony concerning Christs person and coming. Baptisme is an Evangelical Sacrament as well as the Lords Supper, but that is the first, and this the last Sacrament of the Gospel. And thence none ought to partake thereof, but such as have been first Baptized. As in respect of the Sacraments of the Old-Testament, none but such as were circumcised might be admitted to the Paschever. Exod. 12. 48. thus we read concerning the three thousand converts, they were first Baptized, and then received into fellowship, in breaking of bread, &c. Act. 2. 41, 42. Hence also the Lords Supper is a

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332 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

very solemn Ordinance, and ought to be much regarded by those that would approve themselves like Christians. It is the *last* Sacrament that ever was instituted, or that ever shall be whilst the World endureth. It was Instituted at the *last Supper* that ever Christ did eat with his Disciples, just before his death; for the next day his blood was shed upon the *Cross*; so hath the Lord Christ hath bequeathed his Ordinance, as a dying Legacy and Memorial unto his Church. Therefore it ought to be observed with great Religion.

Having shewed what the *Lords Supper* is; and spoken many things, with as much succinctness as we could, concerning the nature, and proper design of this holy Institution of the Lord Jesus; we proceed unto the second Enquiry, viz.

*Who are the true subjects of this Ordinance, or, who are fit to partake at the Lords Table?*

*Ans.* None but gracious holy persons are meet for such an holy communion, *Psal.* 24. 3, 4. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.* Men must be holy in heart and life, or they are not fit to stand in the *Lords Temple*, and to partake of the holy things which are thereto be enjoyed. Except men have experienced a work of Regeneration in their souls, they are not meet subjects of this holy



holy Ordinance. It is therefore mentioned as a great evil, and that which is against the express and solemn charge of the Lord; when unregenerate persons are entertained in the Lords Sanctuary, to participate in those holy enjoyments, *Ezek. 44. 7. 9. I have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, when ye offer my bread and the blood. No stranger uncircumcised in heart, shall enter into my sanctuary.* They whose natures were never changed by converting grace are the *uncircumcised in heart*; and there ore if they eat of *Holy bread*, or drink of *Holy blood*, they profane it. Christ inviteth none to eat and drink at his table, but such as are his Friends, *Cant. 5. 1. Eat O Friends, drink O Beloved.* Now men and women whil'et in a natural and unconverted estate, are not his Friends, but in a state of enmity against him. We read concerning the Prodigal, that he was made alive befo' he was brought to feed upon that which was prepared at his Fathers table, *Luk. 15. 24, 25* So should Christians have a principle of spiritual life in their souls, be'ore they come to the Lords Table. Men do not invite dead, but living persons to come and sup with them. And shall we think that the Lord Jesus will or can approve of dead Guests at his supper? they ought to have Grace whereby they may be able to feed upon Christ in the Sacrament. If the question were, *Whom ought the Church to admit unto such a privilege?*

134 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

*ledge?* the Answer must be those that are visibly Godly, and when in charity we are bound to think that they are able to discern the Lords body, and to feed upon Christ for the redemption of their Souls: men cannot see the hearts, make an infallible judgement who are fit or unfit to be in the sight of God; and therefore must be according to what is visible and apparent, proceeding by the Rules of *Rational charity*: but when the Question is, *who ought come?* the Answer is, *None but such as are made Godly.* And if any shall venture upon the Lords Table whilst in their sins, or in a state of hypocrisy, at the peril of their souls shall it be. It is noted in the parable concerning the Supper, that when the King came in to see the Guests, and saw a man which had not on a Wedding Garment, he said to him, *Friend, how comest thou hither?* Mat. 22. 11, 12. *g. d.* thou wert a bold intruder, more bold then welcome, and shouldst not have dared to come in hither, without the wedding garment, without Faith and Holiness.

To speak a little more fully and particularly here, in order to a profitable partaking at the Lords Table, it is requisite that they who come and sit down there should be qualified.

1. With faith. The Rule which the Apostle giveth, is, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup,* 1 Cor. 11. 28. therefore if he be destitute of that which

is the matter of self examination, or the thing which he is to examine about. He should not presume to eat of that bread, or to drink of that cup. Now the principal thing which a man should examine himself about is, *whether he hath Faith or no.* There must be an hungering after Christ. The soul must stand affected towards Christ, as an hungry man doth towards food. Hungring after Christ, are the work of Faith, in the believing soul. Without this the Ordinance will be unprofitable. It is said, *Joh 6 63, It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.* So outward eating profiteth nothing, except there be a spiritual eating by Faith. Except when the body feeds upon the outward Elements, the soul doth at the same time feed upon Christ by Faith, participating at the Lord's Supper will not be for the better, but for the worse.

2. It is necessary that he comes unto the Lord's Table, should have the grace of Knowledge. Th y must in some measure know and understand all the great saving Truths of the Gospel, the belief whereof is necessary in order to the obtaining eternal life. There is a knowledge which is only a common grace of the holy Spirit. They that know that there is a God, and that Christ is the Son of God, and that he must be submitted unto as Lord and Saviour, have experienced a common work of Gods Spirit enlightning of them. No man can say that Jesus is the

436 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 12. 3. This knowledge is indeed necessary, in order to a worthy partaking at the Lords Table, but it is not sufficient. There is moreover, a saving knowledge, which is a special grace of the holy Spirit, peculiar to the Elect of God, *b. i.* when a man knoweth the truths of the Gospel, so as to feel the transforming sanctifying power of them in his own Soul, 1 Joh. 17. 3. This we truly call the *grace of knowledge*; and the Scripture calls it *Grace*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. *grow in Grace*. And when doth a Christian do so? truly, when he grows (as in the next words the Apostle addeth) *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. There is then the grace of sanctified knowledge. And that is requisite, in order to a profitable partaking at the Lords Table. If a man hath not knowledge to discern the Lords body, he will eat and drink damnation to himself, 1 Cor. 11. 29. He must be able to put a difference between *Sacramental Bread*, and *common Bread*; and must be instructed in the nature and end of such an Institution. Also, he must know and be sensible of this, that in partaking of the Lords Table, men have to do with a Christ, that was dead and crucified for the sins of his people, and must have his heart affected accordingly. This is implied in *discerning the Lords body*. Except a man is able to discern Christ in the Sacraments, not only Doctrinally, but Spiritually, he

is not duly qualified to partake thereof. Therefore,

3. They that come to this Ordinance should bring holy affections along with them. *e. g.* they ought to come with *godly sorrow* for sin. The Children of *Israel* were to eat the *Passover*, with *bitter herbs*, *Exod. 12.8.* so they that partake of the Gospel *Passover*, should have a deep sense of the bitterness of sin, feeding upon the bitter herbs of sorrow for sin, which hath caused the blood of Christ to be shed, his body to be broken, and his Soul to be poured out. Also the grace, the sanctified affection of *Love*, is necessary in order to a profitable partaking at the Lords Table. There must be love to Christ, love to his Ordinances, love to his Saints: especially, those that are of the same particular Church, and sit down together at the same Table of the Lord, had need look well to themselves, in this respect. Hence, when Christ preached his *Sacrament Sermon*, he insisted much on the doctrine of Christian love, by many and mighty Arguments, pressing his Disciples to love one another. When the *Jews* kept the *Passover*, they might not have any Leaven in their Houses: a dreadful curse fell upon the man, that should knowingly suffer Leaven to be in his house at such a time. So when Christians celebrate the Lords Supper, if the Leaven of sinful prejudices one against another, be not duly purged out of their hearts

338 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

hearts, they expose themselves unto the holy wrath of a jealous God, 1 Cor. 5. 8. *Let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* If Christians be not careful about this matter the Lord will not own and accept of them, when they come before him, *Mat. 5. 23, 24.* Nay, their partaking at his Table, will be as no partaking at all. The Apostle therefore, writing to the Church at Corinth, saith, that inasmuch as there were divisions amongst them, when they came together, they *did not eat the Lords Supper*, 1 Cor. 11. 18, 20. meaning, that they did not eat the Lords Supper as they should do. The *Schismes* and *Heart-burnings*, which were amongst them, caused the Ordinance to become unprofitable and ineffectual for the good of their Souls. Yea, more; mens partaking hereof, will do them hurt and not good, if the grace of love be wanting, or not prevailing in them. Therefore in *verse 17.* Paul tells the Corinthians, that *their coming together, viz. to eat the Lords Supper, was not for the better but for the worse.* Not coming in love, they were the worse for coming.

Thus have we shewed both what the Lords Supper is, and who are fit to partake thereof. Except men and women be qualified as hath been expressed, though they should presume to approach the Table of the Lord, they do not  
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keep his Ordinance; but they shall bear sin for it, and die if they profane it. *Lev. 22. 9*

We come now to enquire into the Reasons of this Doctrine: *Why should I believe to do this?*

*Ans. Reas. 1.* Because the Ordinance being Christs Institution; the observation of it, tends to the honour of his Name. It is his Institution, and is therefore called the *Lords Supper*. A Supper from the time when it was instituted, viz. in the night, and the *Lords Supper*, from the Author and Institutor of it, which was *the Lord Christ*. As the first day of the week is called the *Lords Day*, *Rev. 1. 10.* because it is the Day which the Lord Christ hath fastified, and commanded that it should be observed in commemoration of his *Resurrection*. So is this Ordinance the *Lords Supper*, because the Lord hath appointed the observation of it, as a solemn memorial of his *Death*. Nor indeed could any one besides the Lord himself be the Author of such an Ordinance. Men have no power to appoint Sacraments. It belongs to him to appoint the outward sign who can give the inward grace that is signified thereby, and that he Lord alone can do. Now being a Divine Institution, the observation of it doth, (as all Divine Institutions do) tend to the honour of the Name of him who hath said *Do this*. Hereby the Lords Name and memory is upheld amongst his People in the World; and therefore the next words are, *in*

140 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

*remembrance of me.* Especially the remembrance of Christs Death; and so of the saving benefits procured thereby, is continued, by means of this sacred Ordinance, *ver. 26. As oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lords death till he come.* Therefore his people ought religiously to observe it.

*Reas. 2.* Because in duely observing this holy Institution, Believers have Communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The very Names, which the Scripture describeth it by, declare this. As that of the *Lords Supper*, mentioned in this Context, *ver. 20.* They that *Sup* together hold Communion one with another: yea, intimacy of Communion is denoted by that expression, *Rev. 3. 20.* And the *Lords Table*, *1 Cor. 10. 21.* The Master of the Feast holds Communion with his Guests, when they sit and eat together at the same Table. In this Sacred Ordinance, Believers have Communion with Christ in respect of his Spirit, *1 Cor. 12. 13* And in respect of his person and death and all his Redempting benefits, *1 Cor. 10. 16.* The Resurrection of their bodies unto everlasting life, is sealed to Believers, by their partaking at this Ordinance, *Joh. 6. 54. who so eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* If thou art a true Believer, then as sure as thy Body doth feed upon this Bread, it shall be raised from Death unto eternal life.



life. And our Communion or partaking with Christ in respect of his Kingdome, is sealed in this Ordinance. Therefore did the Lord say, when he gave the Cup to his Disciples, *I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the Vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Fathers Kingdome.* Mat. 26 29. Our Reigning with Christ is thereby signified and confirmed unto us: both our reigning with him on Earth, during the glorious transactions of the great Day of Judgment: the Saints sitting together with Christ upon Thrones of Glory, to judge the World, is here in a lively manner represented; and also their Reigning with him in Heaven to all Eternity. When Believers drink at his Table the Lord saith to them You shall one day drink of those Rivers of Pleasure, which are at my right hand for evermore. The Sacrament is as it were a Map and lively Representation of Heaven. For in Heaven there are none but Saints, separated from the World, holding Communion with Christ, wondring at his Glory, ravished with the sense of his love in that he died to redeem them; and is it not so at the Lords Supper: therefore Believers should do this.

*Resol. 3.* Believers should do this, that so their Sou's may grow in Grace.

It is not enough for us to make sure of our being in Christ, but we must see that we grow in him. We must labour for more of Christ in our

242 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

our Souls, and for more conformity to him in our  
liues; to walk in this world, as he walked, and  
to grow up unto more intimacy of Communion  
with him from day to day, *Eph. 4. 15. Col 2. 6, 7.*  
Now the *Lords Supper* is appointed for that end,  
Children by eating and the Lords blessing upon  
their meat, grow until they come unto their per-  
fect stature, as to natural growth: And so is it  
with Gods Children in spiritual respects. The  
best food, and that which is most strengthening  
and nourishing to their Souls, is in this Ordi-  
nance presented before them. Even that which  
is *meat indeed, and drink indeed*, *Joh. 6. 35.* It is  
true that the Word of God is a means of growth  
in Grace. As new born Babes grow when they  
have good and wholesome Milk to nourish them,  
so do regenerate Souls grow, by frequen: feed-  
ing upon the sincere Milk of the Word of God,  
& *Pet. 2. 2.* The same is in a most peculiar manner  
true, with respect unto this Ordinance of the  
*Lords Supper.* No man ever did partake of it as  
he should do, but he had the more Grace for it;  
more of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus given to  
him, more strength in his Soul, more power to  
resist and overcome temptation. They that have  
Grace; yea, they that have most Grace, need a  
great deal more still, therefore should Belie-  
vers *do this*, that so they may have yet more  
Grace.

Use 1. Hence great is their sin, who give themselves a dispensation to live in the neglect of this Ordinance.

The Lord Christ, hath expressly *do this*, but there are many in the World, who call themselves Christians, and know what Christ hath given in charge to his Disciples, concerning this thing; and yet they never did it in all their lives. Certainly, such do not approve themselves the friends of Christ, so much as they ought to do, *Job. 15. 14. Ye are my Friends, if you do what ever I command you.* Here is a great Commandment of Christ, but thou dost it not. How then dost thou approve thy self his Friend? God blessed the *Rechabites*, when they kept the Commandment of *Jonadab* their Father, in their abstaining from Wine, *Jer. 35. 6.* But if thou wilt disobey the Commandment of the Lord Jesus, by refusing to make use of Bread and Wine for a Religious end, notwithstanding his most solemn charge, requiring thee to *do this*: how canst thou expect that God will bless thee. Little do men think how they provoke the Lord by a wilful and continued neglect of so great and sacred an Institution. Is not this particularly to say, that there are Commandments of Christ, and one great duty of Christian Religion, which is not worth the observing? and if thou art one that hast been Baptised into the Name of the Lord Jesus

Jesus, thou art bound to observe all things, whatsoever he hath commanded, *Mat. 23. 19, 20.* And therefore by neglecting to prepare thy self for, and so to come unto this Ordinance, thou livest in the continual breach of thy vow made to God in Baptisme: and will not the Lord find a time to make thee know thy breach of Covenant? Remember what you have heard, concerning that awful Obligation, which Baptisme brings the Souls of men and women under. Doth it not strike terror into thy Conscience, in that thou hast lived so many years unmindful of the Vows of God, which thy soul hath entered in o? Men by sins of Omission, may provoke the Lord exceedingly. So it will appear at the last day, when the Son of God will Judge and sentence them to death, not only because they have committed evil, but because they have neglected to do good. Yea, Omissions, not only of *Moral Duties*, such as Prayer, hearing the Word, Meditation, &c. but of *Instituted Worship*, are many times the reason why the Lord doth manifest his great displeasure against those who are in Covenant with him. Think on that Scripture, *Exod. 32. 34. Let us Sacrifice to the Lord our God;* (and Sacrificing was a duty not of Moral, but of Instituted Worship) *lest he fall upon us with Pestilence or with the Sword.* Hath not God fallen upon us of late years with a Pestilential Disease, and with the Sword? And is not this

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*which Believers ought to observe.* 145

one thing that hath provoked him so to do; in that there are such multitudes of men and women, who content themselves to live without any commemoration of the Sacrifice of the New-Testament, according to *divine Institution*? Believe it verily, for it is a Truth, that godly men and women may by omissions of this nature, provoke the Lord, to bring great afflictions upon themselves and Families. VVhen *Jacob* neglected to build an Altar unto God, did not the Lord follow him, with distressing sorrows in his Family, *Gen. 35. 1.* When *Moses* neglected to circumcise his Child, *the Lord met him and sought to kill him, Exod. 4. 24.* And yet wilt thou notwithstanding all that hath been spoken to thee from the Word of God about this matter, content thyself to live from year to year, not only without Baptisme for thy children but without the Lords Supper for the good of thine own Soul? beware thou, lest some killing Judgement from the Lord, do ere long come upon thee or thine, for this sin. Or, (which would be sad indeed) how if God should be provoked to take away his Ordinances, not only from you, but from others also for your sake, because you have disregarded and despised such mercies? Know also, that by not observing the Lords Supper, you become guilty of breaking *the second Commandment*, by which men are required, not only to reject all humane Inventions, in the Worship of God,

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346 *The Lords supper is an Ordinance*

but also to observe all *Divine Institutions*. And the Lord, is a jealous God, in visiting for the breaches of that Commandment. It is dangerous for any to be found guilty thereof, but most of all for a place or people so circumstanced as we are. It was in a more peculiar manner, with respect unto the *second Commandment*, that our Fathers came into this Wilderness. If therefore the Children that have been born and brought up in the Churches in *New-England*, shall live in the neglect of Divine Institutions, their sin is highly aggravated, and the jealousy of God will smoke against them. One thing more, let me add here; As for such as care not, whither they enjoy this Ordinance of the *Lords Supper*, or no; how unlike are they unto those blessed Martyrs of Jesus, who lived above an hundred years ago, and laid down their lives, that so they might bear witness to the truth of Christ, respecting this *Institution* of his? And (as one well speaks) if God should be provoked to suffer Popery once more to prevail, that men must either observe this Ordinance, in such a way as the Pope Commands, and so be damned for their Idolatry; or else suffer death, for their opposing Antichrist, they will then have sad reflections in their own Consciences, concerning their neglect in this matter. But some one will be ready to say. *I am not fit to partake of the Lords Supper, else I would come?*

*Ans.*

*Ans. 1.* If thou art in thy sins, thou art not a fit Guest to sit down at the Lords Table. If thou art a profane person thou hast nothing to do, to meddle with the Seal of Gods holy Covenant *Psal 50 16.* or, if thou art in a natural unconverted Estate, this Ordinance belongs not to thee; you have heard, *that holy things are for holy persons.* If men with profane hearts or hearts shall eat thereof, they enlarge their Souls. There is an awful Scripture to this purpose, *Lev. 7. 20. The soul that eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of Peace-offerings, (and so doth he do that partaketh at the Lords Table) having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off.*

*2.* If thou art not fit to have communion with Christ at his Table here, thou art not fit for Communion with him in Heaven. If indeed thou art in a state of *Unfitness* for the *Lords Supper*, thy case is lamentable. What, to lie under the Gospel for so long a time, and yet to remain in a Christless estate? how canst thou sleep one night in thy present condition, if thou knowest that to be thy case? for if death should find thee out of Christ, it had been better for thee, that thou hadst never been born.

*3.* A man may be a fit subject to partake at the *Lords Supper*, and yet himself not know that he is so. True Believers, are many times full of doubts and fears concerning their spiritual estates. A child of light, may walk in darkness

¶ 43 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

and have no light, *Isai. 50. 10.* And in that case it concerns men both diligently to try themselves and also to put themselves upon the trial of others, whether they be not duly qualified to partake of the *Lords Supper*. It is not necessary that a man or woman should have Assurance before they come to this Ordinance, since partaking thereof is a blessed means for the obtaining of Assurance. How many Believers are there, that never had Assurance until they came to the Lords Table, and then God manifested himself to them, shedding abroad his love into their hearts by the Holy Ghost, whilst they have been there?

*Use 2.* If to observe this Ordinance be an indispensable duty, we are then to be *Exorted*, that we do this, even as the Lord commands both with respect unto the matter, and the manner of the duty.

Consider 1. *The good and benefits which will follow, if we do this, after such a manner as ought to be.*

There is a signal excellency in this Ordinance, as the time when it was instituted by Christ, doth evince; it was in the night when he was betrayed; at the time when he had all the powers of darkness to encounter with. Therefore surely there is some peculiar excellency in this Ordinance, and great benefit will redound to the Souls of those that



that partake of it aright. Sometimes Believers do sensibly experience good thereby, at the very time of Receiving; even inward comfortings, and soul-ravishing joys of the Holy Ghost. The Lord maketh them joyful in his House of Prayer, *Isai 56.7.* that their Souls go away filled with great joy, as the Lord's people went from the *Passover* in *Hazeljabs* time, *2 Chron. 30. 26.* or, that which is better then comfort follows upon a due partaking at the *Lords Table*, h. e. more Grace and Holiness. In this Ordinance of the Gospel (in a more especial manner) Believers, *beholding as in a Glasse the glory of the Lord are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3. 18.* even from one degree of glorious grace unto another. For the Holy Spirit to come as a *Sanctifier*, is more desirable then for him to come as a *Comforter*: but he many times cometh as both, to the souls of his Servants, when they sanctifie his Name by approaching to his Table with due preparation of heart. Or, if the benefit of the Ordinance be not, (as sometimes it is not) perceived at the time of the Administration, yet afterwards, it will appear.

Consider 2. *The great evil, that is in eating and drinking unworthily at the Lords Table.*

There is *evil of sin* therein. Yea, two of the most fearful sins that can be thought of, do unworthy partakers become guilty of in the sight of God. One is, that sin of taking the *Lords*

### 350 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

*New in vain*: a sin which leaveth a deep stain and guilt upon the Soul, therefore in the third Commandment, the Lord saith that he will not hold him guiltless that shall take his Name in vain, implying that such sinners are guilty creatures indeed before the Lord. The Lords Name is in a peculiar manner upon this Ordinance of his; and therefore they that profane it, are fearfully guilty in his sight. And another sin which they stand charged with, is, that of *Murder*, and the most guilty Murder that ever was, of can be, 1 Cor. 11. 27. *Whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* It is a dreadful thing for a man to have the guilt of blood lying upon his Soul, though it should be the blood of the meanest person in the world; but what then is it to be guilty of the blood of the Lord: To be guilty of Murdering and Shedding the blood of the Son of God, and the Lord of glory. He that offers contempt to the Kings seal, is justly charged with Treason; so is he that doth profane that which is the sign of the body and blood of Christ, justly charged with Murder, so far as much as by such a practice, he doth justify those that have killed the Prince of life: And therefore great evil of punishment, will (without Repentance) most certainly follow, 1 Cor. 11. 29. *He that eat and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself.* There is a

Tem

Temporal damnation, which the holy God doth inflict upon men for this sin, in respect of outward Judgements which befall them. *v. 30. for this cause, namely because of their unworthy, unprepared coming to the Table of the Lord, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* Probably (as some conceive) God sent the Plague amongst the *Cerinthians*, for this very sin, in that though they did partake of the *Lords Supper*, they did it not with that seriousness and preparation which the Rule requireth. They did not manifest due respect to the *body of the Lord*, and therefore he punished them with Diseases and Death upon *their own bodies*. Church-desolating Plagues are the fruit of this iniquity. The Lord Jesus (who holds the stars in his right hand) doth sometimes suddenly remove the lights which he hath set up in his Candlesticks, so as that there shall be no steward of God to dispense the Mysteries of the Kingdom, because men by coming to his Ordinances with a careless and common frame of Spirit have provoked him so to deal with them. Yes, this sin hath been the procuring cause of many of those overturning Judgements which have befallen the Churches of God in the World. It was a weighty and a solemn word, which the Godly, Learned *Paras* spake to a Generation of loose Protestants in *Heidelberg*, *I wonder not* (saith he) *at the War in Germany, when I consider the Sa-*

352 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

*agrament profanations Which you are guilty of.*

Consider 3. *That true Believers may be guilty in this matter.*

They may eat and drink unworthily at the Lords Table. For there is not only an unworthiness in respect of *State*, which hypocrites and unregenerate persons are subject unto; but an unworthiness in respect of *actual indisposition*, and present unpreparedness, for such an holy and near approach before the Lord. A sincere Servant of God, that maketh Conscience to prepare his heart to seek the Lord; some times is not cleansed, according to the purification which is required of those that enter into the Sanctuary, 2 Chron. 30. 19. And on that account, they may be exposed unto severe outward Judgements. So did the Corinthians find it. Such of them as shall not be condemned to the second death, with the Reprobate World at the last day, were judged and chastened of the Lord, in respect of great outward Afflictions; yea, death as to their bodies, because they did eat and drink at the Lords Table, with an unworthy and unsuitable frame of Spirit, 1 Cor. 11. 32. For this cause also, true Believers are sometimes exercised with inward as well as outward troubles; with miserable darkness in their own Souls concerning their spiritual and eternal estates. Did they come with hearts duly prepared into the Lords Sanctuary, great joy would follow, 2 Chron. 30. 26.

For

For Direction here:

1. *Let Christians watch against those things, which if given way unto, will render this Ordinance unprofitable to their Souls.*

e. g. Watch against worl'd'y engagements and entanglements. These caule t<sup>e</sup> Word to become unfruitful, *Mat. 13. 22.* And Sacraments to become unprofitable. When Christians let loose their hearts upon th<sup>e</sup> World, the life of Religion is lost; and they become o<sup>r</sup>mal sight and unprofitable in their attendance upon the most solemn duties. Watch also against scandalous sins. For these will make a man utterly unfit for the present, to approach unto the holy Table of the Lord. Under th<sup>e</sup> Law, if any one hapned to touch a dead body, and so to become ceremonially unclean, he might not at that time, eat the Paschever; but was to forbear until the next Moneth, *Numb. 9. 6, 10. 11.* So if a man hath fallen into a scandalous sin, whereby he is become morally unclean, he ought not to eat the Lords Supper, until such time as he hath renewed his Repentance, and made his peace with God. Moreover, Christians are to watch against lesser evils. Yea, against such things as unregenerate men seldom take notice of. It may be, t<sup>e</sup>re have been proud thoughts stirring in thy heart; or it may be thy Spirit hath been distempered with

154 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

with passion in the week past; and if thou hast not taken notice of it, to be humbled for it, the Lord may be provoked to withdraw his presence and blessing from his own Ordinances; and then thy Soul will not be bettered thereby.

2. *Every time that a Christian cometh to the Lords Supper, he ought to practise that great duty of Self-examination.*

For this that Scripture is plain, 1 Cor. 11:28. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* And this a man ought to do, not only once, before his first coming to this Ordinance, but constantly as oft as he shall eat that Bread or drink that Cup. The Apostle speaketh to those that had been at the Lords Supper many a time, whom nevertheless he calls upon, to practise this duty of Self-examination, as they should have opportunity for Sacramental eating and drinking. A Christian, every time that he is to come to the Lords Supper, should examine himself concerning his own spiritual estate, whether he be in Christ or no. He should examine whether he hath true Faith, having received Christ in his person as the only desirable one, and in all his Offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and whether he hath true Repentance, and hath turned from all sin, unto God, with his whole heart. And whether he hath a sincere love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to his

his Saints, and to his holy waves. He should examine himself concerning his growth in grace. Am I more humble, more holy, more weaned from the World, more meek and self-denying, then I was, when I first believed? yea, moreover, he should examine himself concerning his present actual fitness to sit down and partake at the Lords Table. What sinful failing he hath been guilty of, since he was last at a Sacrament, and whether his heart be now in a spiritual frame, fit for so near an approach unto the Holy God.

3. *Exercise Grace in the time of Receiving.*

A man that is asleep is a living man, yet he is not fit to eat and drink until he be awake, so must true Believers stir up and awake their Graces, or they are not fit to eat and drink at the Lords Table. Sometimes the godly do (in a great measure) lose the benefit of this Ordinance, because they do not exercise grace at the time of Receiving, as they ought to do. Therefore be sure then to exercise Faith. As thou dost receive the Bread, and receive the Cup, let thy Soul at the same moment, put forth a renewed act of Faith in closing with, and taking hold on the Lord Jesus Christ: By an act of Faith appropriate Christ to thy self; and his blood with the merit and efficacy of it to thy Soul in particular, believing that thy Sins shall be pardoned, and the Plagues of thy heart mortified thereby. Also, the Grace of Repentance should be exercised at  
the

156 *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

the time of Receiving. Whenever we look upon a Crucified Saviour, our hearts within us, should mourn and bleed, because our sins have pierced him, *Zech. 12. 10.* And indeed, if it be not so, we *discern not the Lords Body.* The *Corinthians* came with a light frame of Spirit to the Lords Supper; therefore are they charged with not discerning the Lords Body. Had they been aware of a broken and a bleeding Christ before them; another manner of spirit would have been seen in them. If a Child be vain and merry when his Father lieth dead in the room before him we say, he *discerneth not*, what an object is before him. So if men do not bring a broken heart, to a broken Christ; it is a sign that they discern not the Lords Body. Tears of Evangelical Repentance, become Christians when partaking at the Lords Supper.

4. *Let us remember to be exceeding thankful unto God in Jesus Christ.*

The Lord appointed an hymn of praise to be sung when he did institute this Ordinance, instructing us that we should bless God for this Ordinance, and for the glorious things which are held forth thereby. For in the Lords Supper, we have the most lively representation, and demonstration of the love of Christ that can be. We may therein see and feel what Christ hath done for us, and how he hath loved us. As the Apostle speaketh *1 Joh. 1. 1. That which we have heard*



heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. So is it in the Sacrament, the Lord puts eternal life into our hands there, and lets us look upon Jesus Christ, who is in that Ordinance of the Gospel evidently set forth and crucified before our eyes; there we see him upon the Crosse, bleeding and dying for *our* sins, and to save *our* Souls. And the Lord God Almighty, deals with us, as with Children, in so much as he setteth us at his Table, and feeds us with Royal and Heavenly Dainties. Shall the Lord of Hosts, bring us into the ho'y Mountain of his Church, and there make a Feast for us, of fat things full of Marrow and of Wines on the lees well refined; and shall not our Souls be thankful to him, and bleis his Name for ever? In this Ordinance, Believers have intimacy of communion with God, and with Jesus Christ. Truly, our fellowship therein, is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. One may wonder, that such as we are, may be familiar with the King of Glory. When Peter saw that Christ was God as well as Man, he fell down at Jesus knees, saying, Lord, depart from me, I am a sinful man, Luk. 9. 8, So might the Lord say, to the best of us all, thou art a sinful man, therefore get thee away from me, but he saith, (as Joseph sometimes spake to his Brethren) *come near to me I pray you.* Come and be familiar with me, There are

158     *The Lords Supper is an Ordinance*

are two Ordinances especially, wherein we may have familiar communion with the Lord Jesus; one is that of *Secret Prayer*, and the other is that of *the Lords Supper*. And shall we not then be exceedingly thankful? Moreover, the communion which we have with Christ in his Supper, is a pledge of everlasting Communion with him in Heaven. Whereas he doth satisfie our souls with the sweetness of his house here, that is a sign that he will make us drink of the River of his pleasure, in another and a better world. The Lord Jesus will one day bring all his Servants into his Banqueting house, where his Banner over them shall be love. And his causing them to sit down at his table now, is an intimation from Heaven, that they shall be where he is, there to behold his Glory, where their Souls shall feast upon his love, and drink Rivers of Joyes at his right hand; the blessedness whereof no heart can conceive, nor tongue express. Shall we not then bleis God for such an Ordinance? especially as Christ hath manifested himself to our Souls therein; a little of Christ is worth a great deal of thanks.

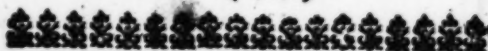
O then treasure up Experiences of the presence of Christ with you in the *Sacrament*; and say after David, *Pal. 103. 1, 2, 3, 4. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleis his holy Name, bleis the Lord O my Soul,*

which Believers ought to observe. 159

and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all  
thine iniquities, and who healeth all thy Diseases,  
who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who  
Crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender  
mercies.

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It is



*It is the Property of a Sincere Godly Man,  
Not to Sit with Vain Persons.*

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PSAL. 26. 4.

*I have not Sat with vain Persons.*

**T**He Prophet *David*, being sensible of those unjust Reproaches and Slander, which *Sauan* and his *Servants* had taken up against him, he Appeals to God concerning his Innocency, desiring that the Lord should be his Judge, and his Examiner. And that is the scope and sum of the two first verses of this Psalm. Having asserted his integrity, he produceth sundry arguments as evidences thereof. 1. His having the Image of God upon him in resp<sup>t</sup> of mercy and truth, argued his sincerity in the Lordsight *Ver. 3. For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked*

*in thy Truth.* Out of respect to the honour of God, he had shewed kindness to those that were unworthy of it, following the Lord's example therein; and he had approved himself true and faithful in all his wayes. 2. He proveth his sincerity in that he had declined the society of sinners. 3. In that he was one who did make Conscience to prepare for, and that delighted in the Worship of God. He was where he would be, when attending upon the Lord in the wayes of his Worship, especially as to publick Worship, and those holy Ordinances which are of Divine Institution. Delight wherein is a great sign of true Grace, *ver. 6, 7, 8.*

The words at present to be insisted on, fall under the second Reason, whereby the Psalmist endeavours to evince his integrity.

And the *Doctrine* from them, is,

*That it is the Property of a Sincere Godly man, not to sit with vain Persons.*

There are three things, which may here be enquired into.

1. What is implied in sitting with vain Persons?

2. Who are those vain Persons that godly men will not sit with?

3. The Reasons of the *Doctrine*, or whence it is, that sincere godly men, will not sit with vain Persons.

M

Q. 1.

*Q. 1. What is implied in sitting with vain Persons?*

*Ans.* We must know 1. *Negatively*, That the words do not intimate, as if all communion with ungodly men were unlawful. For, occasionally to shew kindness and civil respect unto such is lawful, yea, and in some cases a duty. We are to shew all gentleness towards all men, Tit. 3. 2. Acts of charity, are to be extended towards all sorts of men. Though we are especially to do good to the household of Faith, yet not to them only, but as we have opportunity, to others also. Which is implied in that Precept, *Honour all men*. And the Apostle Exhorts Christians to *add Charity unto Brotherly kindness*. The Object of charity is more general and extensive, then that of Brotherly kindness. We are to extend acts of charity not only to such as are Brethren, but to Enemies. Yea, and some Religious communion may be held with those that are vain *Persons*. Though we are to exclude them from partaking in *Intimated*, yet not from joyning with us in Duties of *Moral Worship*. We may suffer them, to joyne with us in hearing the Word. We may pray with those that are vain and carnal. The Apostle *Paul*, prayed with all those that sailed in the Vessel with him, being in number two hundred, and three score and sixteen Souls. and yet but few of them that had any true Religion or fear of God in their hearts, *Ac. 27. 35. 37.* so  
that

that all Communion with vain persons is not forbidden nor implied in declining to sit with them. 1 Sam. 15. 30, 31.

2. To speak positively in Answer to the enquiry before us.

1. *Sitting with Vain Persons, implies unnecessary Communion with them.*

Sometimes Communion with such is necessary. A man may be providentially compelled unto it. So was *Joseph*. when in the Land of *Egypt*; and *David* whilst amongst the *Philistines*; yea, and in *Saul's* Court, where it may be, there was not one godly man, besides himself and *Jonathan*. *Nehemiah* when he lived amongst the *Persians*, *Daniel* and the three *Worthies* with him, when they lived in the Court of *Babylon*, were providentially put upon Communion with vain persons, as to civil Conversation, though they would not communicate with them in their false-worship, or vain Religion. Likewise, a man's particular calling may necessitate him sometimes to converse with vain persons. Therefore the Scripture doth allow more Communion and civil converse with Idolaters and prophane persons, then with those that are under Church censure for scandalous evils; because if Christians should be forbidden all society or commerce with worldly and wicked men, they must go out of the world, 1 Cor. 5. 9, 10, 11. And not only the concerns of a Christians particular Calling, may

necessitate him to be in company with vain persons. But the necessity of such persons themselves may call for it. They may stand in need of relief and charity as to their bodies, or of instruction for their souls, in which cases, and for which ends, it is very lawful to be in their company. But when no necessity, neither of providence nor of precept doth call to be with them, the case is otherwise: we ought then to decline their company. Therefore,

2. *Being with vain persons implies Familiarity with them.*

When a man declineth familiar society with all ungodly men, then he may be said, *not to sit with vain persons.* Thus it was with David, he would not make such his Familiars, or companions. Therefore in another place, he saith, *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy Precepts,* Psal. 119. 63. *Not vain Persons,* but the fearers of God, were the men that he would be familiar with. And when the Prophet *Jeremy*, saith, *I sat not in the assembly of the mockers,* chap. 13. ver. 17. his meaning is, that he had not familiarity with such as those were. If a Professor of Religion, shall make a vain person the man of his council, or enter into a league of special friendship with such an one, he doth exceedingly sin against God. It is noted in the Scripture, as *Jehoshaphat's* great failing, that he was too intimate with *Ahab*, for which the Prophet



Prophet *Iehu*, did faithfully reprove him. And the Lord did sorely afflict him for it, by his providence so ordering, as that *Iehoshaphat* he was endangered, because he had sat with so vain and vile a person as *Ahab*, more than he should have done, & besides that, the Lord to shew his displeasure, let loose many Enemies upon him, whereby he and the whole Kingdome was brought into distress. And when he became guilty of the same error again, by joining himself with *Ahaziah* the King of Israel, who did very wickedly, *Eliazer* prophesied against him, that blasting strokes of God would follow him, for that very sin; and so it came to pass, 2 Chron. 20. 36, 37. To be occasionally civil and courteous unto a wicked man may be both lawful and laudible, but to be familiar with him, or to make a companion of him, is alwayes sinful, and good is never wont to come of it.

3. *Sitting with vain persons implicitly delight in their Company.*

The sincerest man in the world, may be forced into the company of vile and vicious persons, but he taketh little delight in being amongst them. He is out of his Element when in such Company, as not being amongst those with whom his delight is. They will discover such a Spirit, speak such words, do such actions as are very displeasing to a gracious Soul; therefore if he could help it, he would not be much amongst

them. Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, for that Righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds. 2 Pet. 2 7, 8. We ought not to love such with Love of complacency or Delight. Therefore when Jehoshaphat did seem to delight in wicked Akabs company, it was said to him, by the Prophet, *Wouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord*, 2 Chron. 19 2. Indeed a love of pity is to be manifested towards such persons. When there was a civil moral man, but one still in his natural unconverted estate, that came running to Christ, and kneeled down before him with that Question, *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life*, withal professing, that he had from his youth been very careful to observe the Commandments of God; it is said, that Jesus beholding him loved him, Mat. 10. 21. b. e. he pitied him, Bowels of love in the compassionate heart of Jesus, were moved towards him, to see a man in that should perform such duties, and take such pains to obtain eternal life and yet lose his Soul for ever, because he was not built upon a right Foundation. But although, a love of pity is to be exercised towards such, yet not a love of delight in communion with them. They were other kind of persons, whom David took Delight to be among, Psal. 126. 3. *The Saints that are in the Earth. in whom is all my delight*. His delight

delight was in the communion of Saints, and not in fellowship with sinners. And that's a good sign of sincerity, when there is an unfeigned love to the Brethren, as on the other hand, it is a bad sign, when a man loveth to sit and discourse with vain persons, and never thinks the time long enough whilst he is in their company.

4. *When a man doth joyn counsil with vain persons, so as to approve of their wayes, and partake with them in their evil deeds, then he may be said to sit with them.*

To sit with them, is to do as they do, to hearken to their advice, and to follow their example. Thus the expression is elsewhere used in the Scripture, as in *Psal. 1. ver. 1* *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsil of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful,* the meaning is, that the man is blessed who doth not hearken to them, nor follow their example. And *David* declareth his resolution not to joyn in counsil with sinners, or to do as they would have him, when he saith, *I will not sit with the wicked,* *Psal. 26. y.* And hence this sitting with vain persons, is in the next words, expressed by that of *going in* with dissemblers. Now to *enter in* with another, is to tread in his steps, and to follow his example. The children of *Israel* were charged not to *enter in* with the Nations amongst whom they lived, i. e. not to follow or imitate them. *Iosh. 23. 7.* *Elisha* said

168 *It is the Property of a godly Man*  
 Or *Job*, he goeth in company with the workers of in-  
 quity, and walketh with wicked men, because he  
 did mistake some of *Job's* words, thinking that he  
 had said, that a man as good not serve God, as  
 serve him; and so to speak would be to do as the  
 workers of iniquity do; and this is called a go-  
 ing in company with them, *Job* 34. 8. 9. *David*  
 did not go in with assemblers, inasmuch as he fol-  
 lowed not their Example, nor sit with vain per-  
 sons, since he hearkened not unto their evil coun-  
 sels. There were some that advised him to kill  
*Saul*, and to take personal revenge for the inju-  
 ries which he had suffered, but he would not sit  
 with them, when they had Counsels of that na-  
 ture.

We come now unto the second Enquiry, viz.  
*Who are these vain persons that godly men will not*  
*sit with?*

Ans. 1. *Men may be called vain, in respect of*  
*their Opinions.*

The Idolaters are vain persons. An Idol is  
 nothing in the world. It hath no other deity be-  
 longing to it besides what is in the vain imagina-  
 tion of the Idolater. Idols are called *Vanities*.  
 The vanities of the *Gentiles* (i. e. their Idols)  
 cannot give rain. When men Idolize any thing,  
 they will never find that in it, which they hoped  
 for. They will find their Idols vain, and them-  
 selves vain in their expectations of great mat-  
 ters from them, *Jer.* 3. 23. *Truly in vain is sal-*  
*vation*

vation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of the mountains, h.e. from those Idols which the Jews were wont to serve upon hills. and upon many mountains. Now it is against the Rule to have familiarity or unnecessary correspondence with Idolaters. The Lord laid a most strict inhibition on his people concerning this thing, charging them to beware of entering into confederacies with those Idolaters they lived amongst. And in the *New Testament* it is said, what communion hath light with darkne's? what agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? *Come out from amongst them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, 2 Cor. 6 17.* We may not have at all to do with such in their Idolatrous worship, and as little as may be as to civil communion. So concerning those that hold any Fundamental Error in Religion, *Hereticks* (truly so called) are *vain persons*. And we ought not to have communion with such, but if they persist in their Error, we should decline their Society, *Tit. 3 10. A man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition reject.* The Rule forbids Christians to vouchsafe so much as common, civil entertainment unto such persons, *2 Iohn 10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine receive him not into your house, neither bid him, God speed.* Have as little to do with all such persons as may be,

3. *Persons may be vain in respect of their words*

There

There are some that are full of unprofitable words. All their discourses are frothy and unsavoury. You shall never hear a gracious word proceed out of their mouths, or any discourse that shall tend unto spiritual edification. This argueth a vain person. Much more is it true, that those evil communications which corrupt good manners, and which a moral and modest Heathen would be ashamed of, profane and filthy speeches, argue a vain and a vile person. And such as give bad counsel. Persons that will persuade others to sin against God, deserve the Name of *vain persons*. Therefore when *Job* his wife, gave him such desperate counsel as that, *Job* 1.9. *Curse God and aye*, probably supposing that if he should curse God, he would quickly die for it, and so be out of his misery, *Job* calls her a *foolish woman*, a vain person for giving such wicked advice as that was. There is no good but much hurt that cometh by following sinful suggestions. Therefore evil Counsellors, who make it their design to draw others into the way of Error, either as to judgement or practice are the *vain persons* whom my Text, doth in a more peculiar manner refer unto.

3. *Persons may be vain in respect of their practices.*

There are that follow vain courses. Sinful practices are such. For there is nothing to be got by sin, but only shame and misery, *Rom.* 6.21.

What fruit had you in those things wherof you are now ashamed? Sin is good for n thing neither for body, nor soul, nor name, nor estate, but baneful unto those that shall practise it, in all these respects. Vain persons may flatter themselves in their iniquity, foolishly imagining, that they shall enjoy pleasures, or worldly gain by taking sinful and inirect courses to obtain their desires; but in the conclusion, they will meet with a miserable frustration; seeing they have embraced a shadow instead of substance. He that gains by practising iniquity, when he shall compare his losses with his gains, will certainly find he hath lost, that which is ten thousand times better then all that he hath gained. It may be he hath gained a little of the World, but he hath lost his precious Soul, which is more worth then all this World. It may be he hath gained the love and good-will of a vain Companion, but he hath lost the favour of God, in whose favour there is life, and whose loving-kindness is better then the life it self. They then that follow unrighteous practices, *Play the fool*, as *Saul* was forced to confess he did, and they become vain, *Psal. 62. 10. Become not vain in Robbery.* Hence, all profane Sinners are no other then vain persons. Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, Drunkards, and such like. *David* was resolved to have as little to do with such persons as might be, *Psal. 101. 4. I will not know a wicked person.*

And

And the word of God saith, *have no fellowship with such*, Eph. 5. 11. *Do not come among them* saith another Scripture, *Prov. 23. 20. Be not amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh.* Sit not with such vain persons.

4. *All unregenerate men are vain persons.*

For their hearts and thoughts are taken up mostly about vain things. All their cares and utmost endeavours, are about that which is vanity of vanities. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life; worldly profits, pleasures, preferments, are the things, which the natural man doth most of all desire and seek after: Hence they that are only civil moral men, but still in an *irregenerate state*; yea, more, they that are *Formalists* in Religion, but strangers to the power thereof, are amongst the vain persons which my Text speaketh of. And godly men should not make such their intimates, they should not *sit with*, and be one heart with those whom they can not but judge to be poor, vain, carnal creatures still. The Apostle sheweth, that in the last dayes, there will be men that shall have a form of godliness without the power of it, *from such* (saith he) *turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. And it is a sign, that men have little experience of the power of godliness themselves, when they chuse those that are formal, sapless, unfavoury creatures to be their greatest intimates and Familiars.



We come then unto the third Particular, viz.

To enquire in. o the Reasons of this Doctrine, whence is it that a sincere godly man, will not sit with vain persons?

Ans. Real. 1. Because godly men have their natures changed.

They have another nature in them, then what once they had, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Ye are made partakers of the divine nature.* Every man until his Soul is renewed by the power and grace of the Sanctifying Spirit of God, hath only a corrupt nature in him, but the godly man is become the subject of a divine and holy nature. Therefore he is said to have a new heart given to him, Ezek. 36. 26. And to have a new spirit put within him, ibid. And to be made a new Creature, 2 Cor. 5. 17. To be new born 1 Pet. 2. 2. True conversion, implieth not only a marvellous change, as to a mans outward actions, causing him to walk in new wayes, which once he was a stranger unto, but as to his nature, and inward disposition and inclinations. Therefore the work of Conversion is oft in the Scripture set forth by such things as intimate a change of nature, e. g. by that of making a wilderness to become a fruitful field, Isai. 32. 15. The nature of the soyle is changed, when of barren it doth become fruitful; so is it with the truly converted man. And for the same reason it is said, that instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier, shall

174 *It is the property of a godly Man*

*shall come up the mirrle tree, Isai. 55. 13.* The brier and the mirrle tree are plants of very differing natures: but when a sinner is converted a brier is turned into a mirrle tree. Yea, then the Lion shall eat straw like the Ox, (as the Scripture speaketh) and the Wolf is become like a Lamb. *Isai. 11. 6, 7.* Now the nature being changed, there must needs follow a change as to the company which such persons will delight to associate themselves with. Every creature chuseth to be with those that are of the same nature and kind. Doves will be with Doves, and not amongst Ravens; sheep will be with sheep, and not amongst swine. So will sincere godly men (who are in the Scripture in respect of the innocency of their nature compared to Doves, and to sheep) chuse to be with such as are godly, and not with the wicked, who are resembled unto Ravens and Swine. Inasmuch as a sincere Convert, hath his nature changed, the inward desires and delights of his heart are not as once they were. He delights both in those things, and in those persons which once he had no delight in. As for an unregenerate man, his heart doth not cordially close with one that hath much of the Image of God upon him. *The righteous is an abomination to the wicked.* But when grace hath changed his nature, then the more godly any are, the more doth he love and delight in them. And having experienced a change of nature, his heart

heart is taken off from those evils which are most natural unto men; and this sin of affecting vain company. is so.

Real. 2. *Sincere Godly men have had experience of, and found blessed sweetness in another, and a better kind of fellowship.*

And thence, they cannot relish communion with vain persons. One that hath tasted the sweetness that is in holy fellowship, cannot but dislike and dislike sinful fellowship. And this is true concerning the sincere professor of Religion. He hath had experience of the communion of Saints, and hath found that to be edifying to his Soul. Yea, he knoweth what it is, to have Communion with God and with Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, 1 *Job.* 13. *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* And therefore he cannot but dislike the worlds fellowship. The Servant of God prizeth communion with him. His heart finds wonderful contentment therein; he saith, *It is good for me to be here.* And when he has experienced soul ravishing communion with God and with Jesus Christ, he cannot but say to the workers of Iniquity (as David did *Psalm.* 6. 8.) *Depart from me, I desire your fellowship no more.* He hath found such sweetness in holy communion with the blessed God, as that he cannot approve of any thing that would break or hinder communion with him. But fellowship with vain persons will do

176 *It is the property of a godly man*  
do so. A godly man shall find by experience;  
that if his heart be brought into never so holy  
and spiritual a frame, a little occasional commu-  
nion with *vain persons*, will put it out of frame  
again. Therefore he is not willing to sit with  
such as those are.

Reas. 3. *Godly men are loth to lose precious*  
*time.*

They are willing to do as the Apostle doth ex-  
hort, *Eph. 5. 16. Redeem the time.* They know  
that they have but a little time to be in this  
world; but a little time to serve and honour  
God, and make sure of their own salvation  
in. Therefore they are loth to sacrifice their  
precious hours to the lusts of men; or to lose  
any part of their time. Whereas that time  
which is spent in sitting with *vain persons*, is mis-  
pent and lost; and a miserable account is like to  
be given of it at the last day. The holy spirit  
of God has made his Servants sensible that it will  
be with them to eternity, according as they im-  
prove their *moment here*. If they spend their  
time well, so as to be alwayes doing good, they  
shall at the day of Judgement become the Sub-  
jects of an exceeding and eternal weight of glo-  
ry. They that know this, it is not to be won-  
dered at, if they are unwilling to lose precious  
time, in sitting with vain persons.

Use 1. *This may inform us of the great evil*  
*which is in that iniquity of sinful company keeping.*

Es:

Familiar society with vain persons, is certainly a great sin. The evil of it appears, from several considerations.

I., *In that it is not the spot of Gods Children.*

Though a godly man under temptation may be carried away with this inquiry for a time, yet grace will recover him out of it. They that shall continue to associate themselves with vain Companions, it may be said of them, as *Deut. 32: 3. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children* it is not wont to be so, with those that are indeed the regenerate Children of God. Ever observe it, that upon true conversion there is a wonderful change in men as to the company which they delight in. We see it in *Paul* who were his Companions with whom he did associate himself before his conversion? they were men of a malignant spirit: such as would scoffe at the power of Godliness. But how was it after his Conversion? Then he essayes to joyn himself to the Disciples, *Act. 9. 26* The men he once hated and mocked at, are now become most dear unto him. He prizeth communion with those most, whom in the time of his ignorance and unregeneracy, he had most despised. And there is no one thing, that is a greater discovery of the hearts and spirits of men, then the company which they chiefly delight in. A profane man, loveth to be with those that are profane. One that is only a moral man, will be willing to have

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such

278 *It is the property of a godly Man*  
such as are only so, for his most intimate compa-  
nions. But a truly godly man, delights most in  
godly company. They then (whoever they be)  
that make *vain persons* their Familiars and great-  
est intimates, have cause to suspect, and give o-  
thers reason to suspect their sincerity.

2. *Sinful company keeping is a Soul-ruining*  
*iniquity.*

Therefore the wise man saith, Beware of it,  
*lest thou get a snare to thy soul*, Prov. 22. 29. O  
the bloody delolation of Souls, which hath been  
the effect of this woful sin. Every man hath a  
Soul within him, which is more worth then the  
whole world. But thousands and millions there  
have been and are, that by *keeping company* with  
*vain persons*, have had their precious Souls lost,  
and destroyed, and damned for ever. The Scri-  
pture therefore saith, that *a companion of fools*  
*shall be destroyed*, Prov. 13. 20. He that is a com-  
panion of *vain persons*, is in the broad way, which  
leadeth to destruction, and many there be that  
go therein. It is a lamentable thing; yea, that  
which deserveth to be bewailed with the briniest  
tears of blood; that many hopeful young men,  
have by falling in with bad company lost their  
souls and salvation. Time was, when they car-  
ried it well, but they met with vain companions,  
and these have been the eternal ruine of their  
souls. For thereby they have learned wayes of  
wickedness, which before they were not guilty of.  
They

They have learned to become Idle, Unclean, Swearers, Self-polluters, Adulterers; for the which sins, *wo unto their Souls*. Mind what God in his word saith to thee, *Prov. 22. 24. 25. Make no friendship with a furious man, thou shalt not go with him, lest thou learn his ways*. Thus God saith to thee; (and at the peril of thy Soul shall it be, if thou wilt not obey him) go not with a Drunkard *lest thou learn his ways*; go not with an Unclean person, *lest thou learn his ways*, and thy soul within thee mourn at last. But wo and alas! for many a poor creature, that evil companions have been his Counsellors, unto both his temporal and his eternal ruine. It is noted concerning *Abaziah*, that they of the house of *Abah* were his Counsellors after his Fathers death, to his destruction, *2 Chron. 22. 4*. He indeed had a wicked Father, but there is many a young man, born of godly Parents, that upon the death or absence of his Father, hath fallen into acquaintance and familiarity with *vain persons*, whose counsils he hath followed, to the everlasting destruction both of his body and soul. The Devil hath not a greater or more fearful and fatal Engine to destroy Souls by, then this of drawing them into bad company. As long as they continue amongst such, he is sure of them. Therefore men are called upon in the Scripture, as they desire salvation, to beware of familiar society with wicked ones, *Act. 2. 40. Save yourselves*

*from this ungodly Generation.* Do you desire the salvation of your Souls? then renounce communion with an evil Generation of men, who are Enemies to the holy wayes of God. I conclude this particular with the words of *Moses* to the children of *Israel* Num<sup>b</sup>. 16. 26. *He spake unto the Congregation, saying, depart I pray you from the Tents of these wicked men, lest you be consumed in all their sins.* So let me say this day, If you have any love to, or desire of the salvation of your souls, I pray you, and warn you for your souls sake, that you would depart from the Tents of wicked men. Sit no longer with vain persons lest you be consumed in all their sins. The mouth of Destruction may swallow you up also, if Judgement find you in their company.

For 3. *It is such an evil as doth hinder the conversion of Souls.*

Alas how many! that their Souls have miscarried for ever, when others had hopes concerning them, as if they had been in the pangs of the new birth; and this evil hath been the cause of it. \*Some that have been under great awakenings of Conscience; God hath met with them in a Sermon, the Arrows of the Almighty have been within them; that they have thought with themselves they would forsake their sins, and become new Creatures; but they have gone into loose and vain company, and so lost all those convictions, yea and provoked God so,



so, as that he hath said, *his Spirit should strive no more with them.* This is that, which keeps poor Creatures from coming up to the terms of the Gospel; that they do not sincerely close with Jesus Christ, when called upon to make sure of an interest in him. Alas! they know not how to part with their vain Companions. If they might have Christ and sit with vain persons too, they would be Christians: but that can never be. What saith the Scripture, *Eph 5. 14. Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* Arise soul, come away from thy dead Companions, if thou wouldst have Christ to give thee the light of Salvation. But because distracted sinners will remain amongst the Graves, and lodge in the Monuments, and take pleasure in being amongst their dead and rotten Companions, they will not hearken to the call of Christ. Christ saith to the sinner, let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me. But his heart is so strangely besetted with love to his vain Companions, as that the calls of Christ in the Gospel, are not regarded. We see Men and Women sometimes, under mighty impressions from the Word and Spirit of God; there are many such in this place at this day. Would you know whether it be like to prove a saving work or no? Then mark this one thing; Are such persons got clear of their old vain Companions? if so, they are like to do well; for wisdom saith, *Forsake the foolish and*

*live, Prov. 9. 6.* If the Lord Jesus help thee, quite to forsake thy former Companions, in sin and vanity, whom thou didst once delight in, and to endeavour after acquaintance with those that fear God, it is a sign that thou shalt live; For then the greatest snare in the World is broken: there is not a greater snare in the way to Conversion, and so in the way to Salvation, then that of *vain Company*; therefore if the Lord help thee to break through that snare of the *snare*, there is great hope, that thou shalt escape with the life of thy soul, and be delivered from those snares of death and hell, which Satan seeks to take thee alive in.

4. *Sinful Company-keeping will be bitterness in the latter end.*

It may be in his life. Many a foolish creature, hath been brought to great poverty, shame, and misery by this mean. His Estate wasted, his Credit lost, his health impaired, his Friends and Relations (as well as himself) brought into disgrace; and all by his following the company of vain persons. To this purpose, doth the Scripture speak, *Prov. 28. 7.* *He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his Father*; and in verse 19. it is said, *He that followeth after vain persons, shall have poverty enough.* And the dismal experiences of multitudes doth sadly confirm the Truth hereof. How few are there, amongst those that by *Debaucheries* have been brought from a flourishing

ing state into a condition most wretched and rueful, (and many such instances these late sinul dayes have afforded) but if they be asked the reason, will tell you, it was evil Company that did it? Or, however, *this sin* is like to prove *harm*, upon a Death bed. Oh! that young men would consider of it, and hearken to the Word of the Lord this day. Shall I tell you what some young men in this place, have said upon death-beds: when they have felt their Souls going out of their bodies, and lanching into the infinite Ocean of Eternity. There have been some, that when I have seen them dying, and in great anguish of spirit, I have enquired of them what sin it was that did then most of all trouble them: and the Answer hath been, with a bitter and a doleful cry, *O that sin of Company keeping!* *I hate this evil that most of all troubles me now I am dying; that it hath drawn me into many other sins, whereby my Soul hath been ruined.* Young men, think of it, and let it make you tremble to fall into bad company. And know you for certain, that without Repentance, your *Company-keeping*, will be bitterness after death for ever. For they that have been Companions in sinning in this World are like to be Companions in suffering, in another World for ever. Was it not said to *forabel*, *I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, Rev. 2, 22.* They that have had their mer-

ry meetings, their riotings, their drinking bouts, their chambering and wantonness together, except they repent of their deeds, shall be cast together into a bed of great and everlasting Tribulation. Now they are for a *short life* and a *merry*, but they must *wail like Dragons* for it, when God shall break them together, in the place of *Dragons*, and cover their Souls with the shadow of eternal death.

*Use 2. Hence men, especially professors of Religion, should beware of sitting with vain persons.*

It is very sad, that there should be so much need for an Exhortation of this nature as indeed there is. Alas! that as to the company which men keep, there is little difference to be observed between some Professors and the profane. Time was when 'it was otherwise; Men might have been known by their company as well as by any thing else. But how is it at this day? Are there not some *Church-Members* that if a man would speak with them, he must look for them in some Tavern, or in some publick house, and there he shall find them amongst *vain persons*, mispending their precious time. Be astonished at this O ye Heavens.

*Consider 1. You expose your selves unto great danger, by maintaining unnecessary companionship with vain persons.*

You may please your selves with vain imaginations

nations, that such persons shall receive good by being amongst them. But it is far more likely that you will receive hurt by them, than that they shall receive good by you. Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled? Can he have unnecessary communion with vain and vicious persons, and yet his Conscience not be polluted? Remember what Solomon saith, *Prov. 6. 27, 28. Can a man take fire in his bosome and his clothes not be burnt? can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burnt?* Thou takest fire into thy bosome, when thou makest a vain person thy Companion; and burning is like to follow upon it. When God in his word doth prohibit this or that Iniquity, therein is implied that men must abstain from the Temptation leading thereunto, and therefore that they should beware of vain company, as they would not fall into sin, such company being a great & dangerous Temptation unto many sins. Be not so profane, as to plead Christs holy example in eating with Publicans and Sinners, as an encouragement to sit with vain persons. The Holy Son of God had no sin inherent in him, nor could he sin, or be overcome with any Temptation. When Satan came, he found nothing in him to fasten a temptation upon. But how much otherwise is it with thee? Tinder is not more subject to take fire, then thy corrupt heart is apt to be tainted, when the infectious sparks of temptation are flying about thee. There is danger  
also

also, in being amongst vain Companions lest their sins should become thine. Men should make great Conscience of that Rule, *1 Tim. 5. 22. Neither be partaker of other mens sins, keep thy self pure.* When thou fittest with vain persons, thou wilt hear them speak like themselves, vainly, and instead of reproving it, it may be thou wilt but laugh at it. So wilt thou become a partaker of their sins: And if so, how canst thou expect not to partake in their punishments? Come away then from amongst them, that ye be not partakers of their sins, and that ye receive not of their plagues, *Rev. 18. 4.* Did not *Ahaziah* lose his life, because he was found in company with wicked *Jeoram*: Nay, I will suppose thee to be a godly man, one in whom good things are found, but thy godliness will not secure or save thee from temporal judgements, if thou art more intimate and familiar with vain persons, then doth become thy Religion and holy profession. Remember what the Prophet said to *Jeiosaphat*, *2 Chron. 19. 2. Shouldst thou love those that hate the Lord; therefore wrath from the Lord is upon thee.* So I say, shouldst thou sit with vain persons? Shouldst thou frequent their houses? Shouldst thou chuse to travel abroad with such companions? Therefore wrath from the Lord is upon thee.

Consider 2. *You would not be with such company hereafter.*

You would not chuse to be amongst such in  
the

the other world. You would be loth to go where their souls shall go at the hour of death. *David* having said, that he neither did nor would sit with the wicked, might well pray as in the ninth verse of this Psalm, *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Since I loved not their company here, when I die let not my soul be gathered to that Hell where they must go. It is reported concerning *Dr. Weston*, that when he was dying, he had that expression. *I am perswaded God will not now send me to be amongst wicked men, for he knoweth, I did not delight in their company whilest in this world.* Men at death are gathered to their people. They charge their place but not their company. A godly man, when he goeth out of this World is gathered to his People, his Soul goeth to be with the Souls of those that he most of all delighted to be with here. And when a wicked man dieth, he goeth to his People, his Soul is then gathered with sinners, he is carried away to be amongst the Spirits that are in Prison. If you would not be amongst them after death, do not chuse to be amongst them now. And you would not be found amongst such company at the day of Judgement. When vain companions, shall all stand at the left hand of *Jesus Christ the Son of God and Judge of the World*, at the last and great day, you would be loth to be seen amongst them then. And will you sit with them now? Know you not, that when you chuse your Companions,

188 *It is the Property of a Godly Man*  
panions you chuse for Eternity. The persons  
that now you are most familiar with, you are like  
to be with them throughout the dayes of Eter-  
nity.

By way of Direction here :

1. *If you be at any time called to be in company  
with vain persons be sure to demean your selves as  
becometh those that profess Godliness.*

Set an Example of gravity and holiness before  
them, that they may not have any occasion to  
say, These Professors of Religion, these Church  
members, are like one of us. Have no fellow-  
ship with their sin and vanity, but reprove them  
rather, *Eph. 5. 11*. And then you will find, that  
they will care as little for your company, as you  
do for theirs, *Prov. 29. 27*. *An unjust man is an  
abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the  
way is an abomination to the wicked.*

2. *Get acquaintance with Jesus Christ:*

Be familiar with him : yea, let your conversa-  
tion be such, as that it may appear, *that you have  
been with Jesus*. And if you have been with him,  
you will not desire vain-fellowship. Christ saith,  
*he that cometh to me shall never thirst*, *Joh. 6. 35*.  
He will find that sweetness in Christ as shall take  
his heart off from other Objects, that he shall  
thirst



chist after the world, and after worldly vain  
Companions no more.

O therefore let us endeavour after more ac-  
quaintance with God, and with Jesus Christ  
whom to know is life Eternal.

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*Sleeping*



*Sleeping at Sermons is a Great and a Dangerous  
Evil.*

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ACTS 20. 9:

*And there sat in a Window a certain Young Man  
named Eutichus, being fallen into a deep sleep:  
and as Paul was long Preaching, he sunk down  
with sleep, and fell down from the third Loft,  
and was taken up dead.*

*probal June 25.  
1682.*

**I**N this Context, the *Evangelist*, giveth an  
account of a solemn Church meeting,  
which was attended by those Christians,  
who in the Apostles dayes, lived at *Treas.*  
Concerning w<sup>ch</sup> divers things are noted.

1. The day of the week, when these Chri-  
stians did assemble themselves together. It was  
upon

upon the *first Day of the Week*, ver. 7. Inasmuch as Christ rose from the Dead, upon the *first Day*, that is become the Christian Sabbath. One specialty whereby Christians are distinguished from *Jews*, is, in that *Jews* observe the *Seventh*, but Christians the *first Day* as a Sabbath. It was foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament, that in the times of the Gospel, there should be a change as to the Day to be observed for solemn Worship. Thus *Ezekiel* foresaw that under the Gospel, the Lord would accept of the holy offerings presented unto him by his People, not upon the *Seventh* (as it was in the Jewish Church) but upon the *eighth Day* intimating a change, as to the day of Worship, from the *seventh Day*, unto that which follows next after it, *Chap. 43. verse 27.* And *David* Prophesied, that the day of Christ's Resurrection, (*viz. the first day of the week*) should become the Day wherein the Church would praise the Lord, or that it would become an holy day, wherein the Worship of God should be solemnized from time to time, *Psal. 118. 24.* And *Paul* declareth expressly, that inasmuch as Christ hath finished the work of Redemption, and is entered into his rest, there remaineth *the Keeping of a Sabbath*, or another day of holy Rest, distinct from that of the *seventh Day*, which was observed by the *Jews*, *Heb. 4. 9. 10.* And we find in the Scripture, that Churches did by the Apostles direction, religiously

ously observe the first Day of the week, 1 Cor. 16. 1. *Iustin Martyr*, and other ancient Writers, shew, that in the Primitive Times, Christians kept the first day of the Week as their Sabbath; and so hath it been in the Christian Church in all ages thereof. The work of Redemption is greater then that of Creation. Upon which account, if the *seventh day* was set apart to commemorate the work of Creation. it is not to be wondred at, if the Lord Christ hath appointed the *first day of the week* to be kept holy unto himself in commemoration of the work of Redemption.

2. The Evangelist declareth for that end it was that the Disciples at *Troas*, met together on the day mentioned. It was not for Civil but for Religious Ends and Purposes; nor indeed may Christians (excepting when pretent and indubitable necessity shall call for a dispensation) meet together on that day of the week, to attend any other work, but such as are of an holy nature. One thing then which these Disciples came together for, was, to *break Bread*, h. e. to eat the Lords Supper. The breaking of the Consecrated Bread, is a Sacramental Action, whereby the sufferings of Christ are signified; and is therefore by a *Synecdoche* put for that whole Ordinance, which is appointed to shew forth the Lords Death until he come. Moreover, these Disciples at *Troas*, met upon the Lords Day; that

that so they might hear the Word Preached, as well as partake at the Table of the Lord. And because the Apostle Paul, was the next day to depart from them, and it may be never more to speak unto them, in the Name of the Lord; he continued long in his Sermon, even until midnight.

3. Here is noted the particular place where these Corinthians met, *ver. 8. There were many lights in the upper Chamber, where they were gathered together.* Christians had not in those dayes, the liberty of publick Meeting houses, because the higher Powers then were enemies to the Truth. Therefore the Disciples were glad to meet in private Houses, there to solemnize the Worship of God, according to his own holy Institution. And because of their Persecutors, they did assemble themselves together in the night time, when others were asleep, and would be less apt to observe them. And there were many lights in the room, that so if their Adversaries should happen to come upon them, they might have no occasion from the time of their being assembled together, to reproach them, as if they met to practise the deeds of darkness. Notwithstanding this circumspection, we find in the *Apologies* of some of the Antients, that the Enemies of the Church, did take occasion to traduce & slander them, as if they did *convene* for wicked ends and purposes: but when they did  
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manage

manage matters, with such Christian Prudence as these Disciples did, there was no occasion given; only maliciously taken.

4. Here is recorded a *Remarkable providence* which hapned on the day, and in the place mentioned, wherein a certain young man, named *Eutychus*, was concerned. To declare which, is the scope of this verse, wherein we have expressed.

1. The evil which *Eutychus*, was guilty of, in brief, *he slept at a Sermon*. Yea, and he did not only slumber, but gave way unto Temptation, so far, as to fall into a *deep sleep*.

2. Here is noted the evil which befell him. An awful rebuke of divine providence, did at the very time when *Eutychus* was sleeping and so sinning under the dispensation of the Word, overtake him. Being asleep, he fell down from the loft where he sat, and was killed with the fall, *he was taken up dead*. His Breath, Life, and Soul was struck out of his body; only the Lord was pleased miraculously to restore him unto life again. He was suddenly surprized with sleep; and he was in danger of being surprized with a sudden sleep of death, for it. And this is Recorded in the Scripture, that so others; yea all Christians in after Generations, who should hear of it, might beware of doing as *Eutychus* did, that they might take heed of sleeping, when they should be hearkening to that word, which

*a Great and a Dangerous Evil.* 193

is spoken of them, in the Name of the Lord.

The *Doctrin*, which may therefore at present<sup>7</sup> be insisted on, is,

*That Sleeping at Sermons is a Great and Dangerous Evil.*

In the prosecution of this *Doctrin*, I shall only attend two things.

1. To Prove. 2. To Apply the Truth.

*Q. How doth it appear, that sleeping at Sermons is a great Evil?*

*Ans. 1. In that there is sin therein.*

Sin is the greatest of Evils. Nor ought any sin to be accounted a little evil. But when men sleep at Sermons, they sin against God: for such a practice is contrary unto Scripture Precept. If men will do as the Scripture requireth, when the word of God is spoken, they must attend and encline their Ears unto what is said, Prov. 4. 20. Yea, they ought to give earnest heed therunto, Heb. 2. 1. They then, who instead of heeding and hearkening unto what is spoken, shall sleep away the Sermon; transgress against the Rules of Scripture. And we read of those in Scripture who have hearkened to the Word of God with great attention, whose commendable example is Recorded for our Imitation. When Ezra brought the Law before the Congregation of men and women, and stood upon a Pulpit of wood,

wood, which they had made for the purpose; the ears of all the People were attentive to the Book of the Law, Neh. 8. 3. And it is noted concerning some of Christs Auditors, that they were attentive to hear him, Luk. 19. 43. They kept their ears, and so their eyes open, whilst the Sermon was Preaching. And it is truth is, that sleeping under Sermons is a breach of the third Commandment, which doth respect the manner of Worship requiring the great st Devotion and attention in the service of God. Sleepy Praying, and sleepy Hearing is a taking of his Holy Name in vain. His Word is called his Name. When the Gospel is evil spoken of, his Name is said to be blasphemed. 1 Pet. 4. 1. They that shew no more respect unto his Word, then to sleep at it are guilty of *despising his Name*. The Lord said to the Jewish Priests, *ye despise my Name*, and when they asked wherein have we *despised thy Name*, it was replied; in that you say, *the Table of the Lord is contemptible*, Mal. 1. 6, 7. So may it be said to Sleepers at Sermons, you have despised Gods Name; if you ask *wherein?* The Answer is, in that by sleeping at Sermons, you practically say, that the Word of the Lord is contemptible.

2. *Sleeping at Sermons doth proceed from evil causes.*

Thats another thing that doth evince the evil of it. Things are according to the causes which



which they arise from. Now Satan is the external cause of this evil. Interpreters observe, that Satan had a bloody and malicious design, in causing *Eutychus* to fall into a profound sleep, when the Apostle was in his Sermon; hoping thereby both to occasion ruine to the *Sermon-sleeper*, and to cause a great disturbance in the solemn Worship of God. Nor did that Enemy to the good of Souls altogether fail in attaining some part of his end. Only God according to his infinite power and wisdom, made this fall of *Eutychus* to be an occasion of glory to his own Name, both in respect of the Miracle which then was wrought, and in that this awful stroke upon *Eutychus*, must needs make others afraid to do as he did, so that his sleeping hath been a means to prevent many an one from sleeping at Sermons, which was the thing that the Lord intended, when he permitted Satan so far to prevail as he did; But the Devil had another end; he knoweth that when the Word of God is faithfully dispensed, in case men attend unto what is spoken, good is like to come unto their Souls thereby; and that's the thing that the Devil is afraid of; and therefore he useth all means he can possibly, to cause the good seed of the Word which is sown, to become unfruitful. And one unhappy way, whereby he doth accomplish it, is by causing them to sleep at Sermons. Hence in the Parable concerning the Sower, it is said, of the seed

which sell by the way li'e, that the fowles of the Air came and devoured it up, Mark 4. 4. whats meant by these Fowls of the Air? you have it expounded in ver. 15. where it is said, *Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown.* How doth Satan rob men of the benefit, which they might receive by the VVord of God? he hath divers cunning and cursed *Artifices*, whereby he can accomplish his design. One and he hath none greater or more effectual) is to prejudice the minds of men against the Truth, or against the Dispensers of it. God complains of the false Prophets (who were the Devils Factors) that they did *steal the Lords words every one from his Neighbour*, Jer. 23. 30. because they laboured to prejudice their neighbours against the true and faithful Prophets of God, and so robbed their Souls of that precious treasure and benefit which the word would have afforded to them. It is never so, but Satan hath a deep hand therein. And another Artifice which he useth, to deprive men of that good, which they might receive by hearing the VVord is, that he causeth them to *sleep at Sermons.* And from thence it cometh to pass, that men are most sleepy at *Sermon time.* Before the Sermon began, they were not drowsie, and after the Sermon is ended, they are not so; but just at that season, when they are called to attend unto the word of God, they are apt to drowse and sleep. This is

as Satan would have it. He had rather have men wakeful at any time, than at *Sermon time*. And as for the *internal cause*, of mens sleeping at Sermons; it is from that *Infirmity* which they are subject unto, and miserably attended with. In some, it proceeds much from *Natural Infirmity*. Some are naturally of more wakeful, and others of more sleepy tempers and dispositions. And old age doth naturally incline men unto infirmity in this as well as in many other respects. But especially, this evil proceeds from that sinful and *moral Infirmity*, which men are woefully subject unto. Hence it was, that the Disciples slept when they should have been fervently praying to God, *Mat. 26. 40. 41.* *Jesus cometh to the Disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith to Peter, what, could you not watch with me one hour. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* There was in the Disciples of Christ, spirit as well as flesh; so far as they were made spiritual, they were willing to have watched with Christ; and had newly manifested their willingness, by professing their readiness to die for his sake; but because of a carnal unregenerate part, which at that time prevailed, they, slept when Christ bid them watch. It was because of their *Flesh*, their infirmity both natural and moral, that they slept when they should have been watching and praying, and the same is true, if men sleep when they should be watching and hearing. Had nos

men sin and corruption in their hearts, it is certain, that they would not sleep at Sermons.

3. *There are evil effects which follow upon mens sleeping when they should be hearkning to the Word of God.*

We shall shew this in some Particulars, all which tend to evince the truth of the *Doctrine*.

1. One evil effect which follows upon sleeping at Sermons is, *That Mens hearing the Word, is thereby rendered unacceptable to the Lord,*

The great thing which should be aimed at in every duty, is that we may find acceptance with God, in what we do. And therefore to look well to the manner of performance. For that is necessary in order to the obtaining of divine acceptance, *Luk. 8. 18. Take heed how you hear.* It is not enough for men to pray, or to come together to hear the word preached, &c. but every one had need consider, after what manner do I pray, after what manner do I hear? If they take not heed how they hear, so as to approve themselves to God in respect of the manner as well as the matter of duty, they will not find acceptance with him, *Mal. 1. 8. If you offer the blind for sacrifice is it not evil: offer it now to thy Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?* Thus when a man doth offer a sleeping prayer before the Lord, or a sleeping attendance upon duty in respect of hearing the Word, *Is it not evil? doth he not offer the blind? will the Lord accept*

accept of it, or be pleased with such services wherein there is no life of devotion? His hearing will be so far from pleasing God, as that it will become a provocation, if he doth willingly set himself to sleep at Sermon time. If an Earthly Prince, should send his *Ambassadors*, to treat with any about matters of high concernment, and they should manifest no more regard unto what is said, then to fall asleep, whilst the Message is in delivering; would it not provoke? The Ministers of God are in Scripture stiled his *Ambassadors*, 2 Cor. 5.20. *We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

These Ambassadors for Christ, are sent to treat with men about matters of the greatest concernment that possibly can be; yea, to propose unto them in the Name of that God whose they are, and whom they serve, terms of Peace and Reconciliation; and they do it in *Sermons*, in that way, they treat with men about the everlasting concernments of their precious and immortal Souls. Now to sleep at the very time when these Messages are delivered, is so far practically to condemn the Word, and must needs be displeasing unto him whose word it is, and in whose name delivered.

2. Another evil which doth follow upon sleeping at Sermons, is, *That it doth cause the Word Preached to become unprofitable, yea, hurtful to the souls of men;*

It

It is a sad thing, when Men shall receive the *Grace*, (i. e. the Word of God,) *in vain*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. yet so do they do, who indulge themselves in sleeping at Sermons. If it be so, as the Apostle speaketh in another case, *then is our preaching vain*. Suppose the Truths delivered be never so precious, if people are asleep, it is to them, as if no Word were spoken, excepting that they must give a dreadful account for that which they might have heard for their Souls good; but would not when called of God thereunto. A Minister of Christ had as good speak to the Seats, and Pillars, and Walls of the House, as to men that are (like him whom my Text speaketh of) *in a profound sleep*. Nay, there is danger that the Word will then (through their own default) become hurtful to their Souls. It was said to the *Corinthians*, 1 Epistle Chap. 11. ver. 17 *You come together not for the better, but for the worse*. If Christians come together, to eat the Lords Supper, but mind not after what manner, their coming together is for the worse. And if they come together under pretence of hearing the Word preached, but set themselves to sleep, instead of reverend attention unto what is spoken, they come together for the worse. It were better not to come, then to come only to sleep. As the Apostle there speaketh, ver. 22. *How ye not Houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the Church of God*. So I say, have you not Houses to sleep in,

in, that you must come and openly despise an Ordinance of God?

3. Another evil effect of sleeping at Sermons, is, that it *makes men have a guilty Conscience.*

Sin doth so, especially known sin, and in a most peculiar manner breaches of the third Commandment, the Lord having said, that *he will not hold those guiltless that take his Name in vain*; but all this is true of those that sleep at Sermons. Hence except their hearts are strangely obdured in the wayes of sin, they feel checks of Conscience for this evil. Men have that in their own breasts which tells them, that they should not do so, when they give way to temptation, and fall asleep under that solemn dispensation of the Word of God, spoken to them in his Name. And when the Lord awakens Conscience, there are great troubles of spirit for this sin. It hath been so with some of the Elect of God at their first Conversion. God hath made it a sad and a terrible thought unto them, to consider, how many Sermons they have lost, and sinned, and slept away; how they have turned a deaf ear upon the Messages which the Lord hath sent from Heaven to them.

4. *Men are hereby exposed unto Judgement:*

Guilt binds the sinner over unto the righteous judgement of God. Temporal Judgements are many times inflicted for this sin, and that not only on the profane ungodly world, but on the  
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Lords own servants. As this instance in my Text doth make to appear. Indeed we read of but one godly man in the Scripture, ( viz. *Eutychus* the man whom my Text mentions ) that did sleep at a Sermon, and what a memorable and awful death had he like to have suffered, because of this his sin? and yet a great deal more might be said to excuse him, then most of those that use to *sleep at Sermons*. can plead for themselves. For *Pauls* Sermon, at that time was very long; and it was not in the day but in the night; yea, at midnight, when men are naturally more inclined to sleep; yet when *Eutychus* thus circumstanced, gave way to temptation, so as to fall asleep, when he should have been hearkening to the word of God, he must be smitten with a sudden and a deadly blow; that as *Jonathans* said, *1 Sam. 14. 43. I did but taste a little Honey, and lo, I must die.* So this man, did but take a little sleep, a short nap whilest the Sermon was Preaching, and lo! he must die for it. And as for those that have been notorious *sleepers at Sermons*, indulging themselves in that iniquity, God oftentimes curs them off, by sudden and awful strokes of his hand. Yea, and spiritual judgements are the bitter fruit of this sin. For this cause, the Lord in righteous judgement doth blast his word to the Souls of men, that they are never converted nor saved thereby, but they become like unto *Ezekiels* Marishes and  
Miry



Miry places, they are given unto salt and shall not be healed, Ezek. 47. 11. They are smitten with that curſe of ſpiritual and perpetual barrenneſs of ſoul. When men are ſo profane as to ſet themſelves to ſleep at Sermons, the Holy God is ſo provoked at them for the contempt of his Word, as to reſolve and ſwear againſt them; that they ſhall never be converted, or receive any ſaving benefit thereby. And when this becometh a general prevailing iniquity amongſt a profeſſing people, the Lord is ſometimes provoked to take away his Word from them. He calls home his Ambaſſadors, and brings a Famine of his word. VVhen mercies are ſlighted, God knoweth how to raiſe the price of them, and to make men know the worth of them, by the want thereof. VVhen the Jews were grown weary of Sabbaths and of Sermons, which were Preached to them, both on the weekly Sabbath, and at their New Moons, that which followed, was, the Lord ſent upon them a Famine, not a famine of bread, (but a more dreadful even a ſpiritual famine) of hearing the Word of the Lord, Amos 8. 3. 11. The Lord may well ſay, if you have no more reſpect unto my word, then to ſit & ſleep under it; you ſhall hear Sermons few enough, until you have learned to hear with better attention; and know that in as much as you have ſlept Sermons away, you have alſo ſinned them away.

4. *Sleeping at Sermons is an evil ſign.*

For,

For, 1. *It argueth great inconsiderateness and unmindfulness of those things which men ought to consider of.*

It is an evidence that men are not aware of those things which they ought to remember, whenever they come to hear the Word of God dispensed in his Name. Its a sign that they do not consider of the dreadful place and presence which they are in. We may say of a solemn Church-Assembly as Jacob speaketh concerning that place where the Lord appeared to him, *Gen. 28. 17. He was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place, this is none other but the House of God.* There is a special presence of God in Church-Assemblies, which maketh such places to be holy, and therefore dreadful. Its true, that in these dayes, one house is as holy as another. But it is also true, that in whatever house God is worshipped, during the time of worship, there is a special presence of the Lord there, and therefore during the time of worship, the place is holy. Hence reverence in Behaviour is required of men whilst in such places. It was said to *Moses, Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, h. e. shew reverence as to thy outward behaviour, (for putting off he shoe was, and is at this day amongst the Eastern Nations, like putting off the hat with us) for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground; namely, because of a special presence of God which was in that place at that time,*

time, *Exod. 3. 5.* So there is in Church Assemblies: if men are so irreverend there as to fall asleep, and it may be to put themselves into sleeping postures, it is a sign that they consider not this. The presence of Ho'y Angels is awful. Yet such a presence is there, in Church Assemblies. Hence the *House of God* is said to be the *Gate of Heaven*, *Gen. 28. 17.* In old time, Princes kept their Courts in the Gates of the City; and there they had their Ministers and Servants to attend them. Thus the Lord doth as it were sit upon his Throne, in Church-Assemblies, and there are Holy Angels attending him in those *Gates of Heaven*. The Apostle therefore Exhorts men and women to behave themselves with all due reverence and circumspection, in the solemn worship of God, *because of the Angels*, *1 Cor. 11. 10.* Angels come down from Heaven, into our solemn Assemblies, and observe not only how Ministers Preach, but how People hear; who attends, and who doth not attend; who sleeps and who keeps awake. When People sleep at Sermons, it is a sign that they consider not of this as they ought to do. Yea, it is a sign that they consider not with whom they have to do in Sermons. It is said, that *the Word of God is quick and powerful, and that all things are naked unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, *Heb. 4. 12, 13.* so that in hearing the Word, men have to do with the All-seeing God. If they sleep  
under

under it, that's a sign they remember not this. Did any of you hear an Earthly Monarch speaking to you, the consideration of the greatness and authority of the Speaker would keep you awake. And would men sleep, if they knew that the Majesty of Heaven is speaking to them?

*2. When Men sleep at Sermons, it is a sign that they have not that love to, and delight in the word of God, which they ought to have.*

It is noted of the Primitive Christians that they received his word *gladly*, *Act. 2. 41.* There is not so much of that spirit as should be in those that sleep when they should hear. This argueth that men do not (with *David*) prize the word above all riches, and that it is not the delight and the rejoycing of their hearts. They can keep awake easily enough, when they hear that which they love and delight to hear. A vain and wicked creature, if he hears frothy and foolish Discourse, is not sleepy nor weary, because his carnal, un sanctified heart delights therein. Let the same person hear Sermons, or any serious and profitable matter discoursed of, and hee quickly sleep. This is a sure and a sad sign, that he taketh but little delight therein.

We come now to Apply this Truth :

And the first Use may be by way of Instruction  
on or Information .

Instr. 1. *We may here take notice that the nature of man is wofully corrupted and depraved, else they would not be so apt to sleep when the precious Truths of God are dispensed in his Name, Yea, and men are more apt to sleep then, than at another time. Some woful Creatures, have been so wicked as to profess they have gone to hear Sermons on purpose. that so they might sleep, finding themselves at such times much disposed that way. This argueth as Satans malice, so the great corruption and depravation of the nature of men, whence it is that they are inclined unto evil, and indisposed to the thing that good is. Yea, some will sit and sleep under the best Preaching in the World. When Paul was alive, there was not a better Preacher upon the Earth then he. Austin had three wishes: one was, that ( if the Lord had seen meet ) he might see Christ in the flesh : his second wish was, that he might have seen Paul in the Pulpit ; but notwithstanding Pauls being so excellent a Preacher, there were some that could sit and sleep under his Ministry. When Soul-melting Sermons are Preached about Christ the Saviour, about the pardon of sin, about the glory of Heaven, there are some that will sleep under them. When*  
soul-

soul-awakening Sermons are Preached, enough to make rocks to rend and to bleed; when the word falls down from Heaven like Thunder, the voice of the Lord therein being very powerful and full of Majesty, able to break the Cedars of *Lebanon*, and to make the wilderness to shake; yet some will sit and sleep under it: such is the woful corruption and desperate hardness of the hearts of the Children of men.

*Instr. 2. Hence see, that there is great danger in those things which men are apt to look upon as little sins, yea as no sins at all.*

As for sleeping at Sermons, some look upon it as no sin; others account it a *peccadillo*, a sin not worth taking notice of, or the troubling themselves about. But my Text sheweth that danger and death is in it. VVe have solemn Instances in the Scripture, concerning those that have lost their lives, because they have been guilty of such mis'carriages, as carnal reason will say are but little sins. VVhen there was a man that gathered a few sticks upon the Sabbath day, he was put to death for it; and yet men would be apt to think his sin was not (though indeed it was) very great. Men account it a small matter to add something of their own to the worship of God: but when *Nadab* and *Abihu* did so, there went out fire from the Lord, and consumed them to death. VVhen *Uzzah* a good man, did

did with a pious intention touch the Ark, (which he being no Priest should not have done) God smote him for his Error, that he dyed by the Ark of God. Behold! the severity of God, and let us tremble at it. Common sins, which almost every one is guilty of, are accounted small iniquities; but there is exceeding danger in following a multitude to do evil. Sins of Omission are esteemed small, but mens Souls may be thrown into the fire and burned for ever, not only for bearing evil fruit, but because they do not bring forth good fruit, *Mat. 3. 10.* At the last day the Son of God will pronounce a Sentence of eternal death upon thousands of Millions, because they have omitted these and those duties which he required and expected from them. Sinful words are looked upon as small evils by many. How common is it for persons to say, *what shall we be made offenders for a word?* abusing that Scripture which reproveth those that make others offenders for speaking good and faithful words. But doth not the Scripture say, *by thy words thou shalt be condemned, Mat. 12. 37.* Corrupt communications, obscene discourses, unclean lascivious speeches, discover the persons that delight in them to be amongst the number of those that shall (without Repentance) be condemned at the day of *Judgement*, yet there are some that make light of them. Thus concerning those words which some call *Petty Oathes*; some

are so profanely ignorant as to think, that they may Swear by *their Faith and Troth*, and that there is no great hurt or danger in it. But there is danger of no less then Damnation for these seemingly little sins, if men shall allow themselves therein, notwithstanding the Commandment of God to the contrary. See the word of the Lord to this purpose, *Jam. 5. 12. But above all things Swear not, (i. e. vainly, or except duely called therunto) neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath, therefore not by your Faith or Troth, lest you fall into condemnation.*

Again, sinful thoughts are esteemed small evils; but I must tell you, that vain thoughts, and much more vile unclean thoughts, if indulged and delighted in, may hinder the Salvation of a mans Soul. Witness that Scripture, *Jer. 4. 14. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved - how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? so that there is more then a little danger, in those evils, which men account little sins.*

*Inst. 3. If sleeping at Sermons be such an evil as hath been evinced, there is then cause to fear, that the Lord hath been contending with his People in his Land, by awful Judgements, partly on the account of this iniquity.*

The late Synod, who convened on purpose, to enquire



enquire into the causes of the Lords controversy with *New-England*, have mentioned this amongst many other provoking evils. And there is great reason to think, that, that holy God who will not hold the takers of his Name in vain guiltless, hath been not a little displeased for this sin. Inasmuch as it is a common evil. I doubt it may be said, that there are many such offenders in almost every Congregation throughout the Land. I must confess to my exceeding joy, that there are as few *sleepers at Sermons*, in this Congregation, as in any that I have observed in the Countrey; yet there are some and too many. It is a sin, which Professors and Church-members (as well as others) are guilty of; and 'tis past doubt, that it hath been for their sins in a more peculiar manner, even for the provoking of his Sons, and of his Daughters; that God hath sent the Sword, Fire, and Death amongst us. This is a sin, which is not punished by men, but therefore the Lord himself will visit for it. And truly some of those awful Judgements, which we have sadly experienced, seem to have a special respect unto this sin. Those fearful and amazing voices in the Heavens, even Thundrings and Lightnings, which have caused many amongst us to be horribly afraid; and some have (like *Eutychus*) been taken up dead, the Thunder of God having killed them in a moment; hath not the Lord sent them usually upon the very day when Sermons

are wont to be Preached, or upon the next day thereto; as if the Lord should say, if you will slight and sleep at my word, I'll make you to hear that which shall awake you with a witness. And doth not God threaten with a Famine of his word? How many bereaved Congregations are there? and some that have been a long time without the Ministerial dispensation of the Word and Sacraments. Well may it be so, if People when they enjoyed a faithful Ministry, shewed no more respect and reverence towards God speaking to them therein, then to sit and sleep under it.

*Instr. 4. If sleeping at Sermons be a great evil, then their iniquity is exceeding great in the sight of God, who do that in Sermon time, which is worse then sleeping.*

*1. c. g. To Play at Sermon time, as wicked children who have no grace nor fear of God in their hearts, will sometimes do. If you do thus on the Sabbath day, you break the third and the fourth Commandment both at once; and then how guilty! how guilty! are you in the sight of the holy Lord God, who is in this dreadful place, but you are not aware of it. So for persons to sit Laughing in the presence of God, when his Word is spoken to them in his Name, their sin and profaness is exceeding great before the Lord. What dost thou think will become of thy immortal soul?*

soul? dost thou think that God will have mercy on thee. Repent of this thy wickedness, or I do most solemnly declare unto thee in his Name, God will not have mercy on thee: He that made thee, will shew thee no favour. The Lord saith, he will look unto those that are of a contrite Spirit *who tremble at his Word*, *Isai 66. 2.* Thou then, that art so far from trembling at the Word of the Lord, as to *Laugh* when it is spoken to thee; the infinite Majesty, who hath Heaven for his Throne, and the Earth for his Foot stool, will not look upon thee; he abhors to see or to look upon such a prophane wretch as thou art: But inasmuch as thou dost laugh at his Word now, repent speedily, or the time draweth on, when distress and anguish will take hold on thy Soul, and then God will laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh. And therefore hear and fear now, and do no more so wickedly. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, *Luk. 6. 26.* *Wo to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.* So I say, wo to you that laugh at Sermons now, for you shall mourn, and never laugh more. When wilt thou say? even when thy soul shall be with *Devils*, crying out, world without end. *I am tormented in this flame.* And O think how the Devils will taunt & mock at thee, and say, why don't you laugh now? Remember you heard such a Minister of God Preach, he brought you the glad tidings of eternal Sal-

vation, and the sad news of everlasting destruction, but you laughed when you heard him speaking after the most solemn and earnest manner; is it a laughing matter now think you? were they not the great Truths of God, that were spoken in his Name? Then with tears of Blood trickle down thy dry and damned cheeks for ever and ever, because thou mayest not be so happy as to hear one Sermon, or to have one offer of Grace more, throughout the never-ending dayes of Eternity.

Use 2. If sleeping at Sermons be so great an evil as hath been said, then let those that have been guilty, of this evil, be exhorted to be humbled for what's past, and to beware of it for times to come.

7 Consider 1. Men must give an account another day for every Sermon.

If it be true, (as it cannot but be true, because the mouth of him who is Truth it self hath spoken it) that of every idle word which men shall speak, they must give account thereof at the day of Judgement, Mat. 12. 36. Certainly they must give an account concerning every Sermon which they hear. Sleeping at a Sermon is a greater sin, then speaking an idle word. Therefore if men must be called to an account for idle words, much more for this. All those Talents, which the Lord doth intrust any with, they must be accountable

able for them another day: Now Gospel Sermons, are amongst the most precious Talents, which any in this World have conferred on them. But what a sad account will be given concerning those Sermons which have been slept away? As light as thou makest of it now, it may be Conscience will roar for it upon a Death bed. Not many years ago, there was a young man, that being wont to come to hear the Word in this Congregation, when he was upon his sick-bed, which proved his death-bed, he desired to speak with me, and when I came to him, he had this expression, *O Sir, sometimes whilst Sermons have been Preaching: I have set my self to sleep on purpose, and do you think it is possible, that one that hath done so, should ever find mercy with God.* And if this be a trouble on a death-bed, will not the thought of it, be a terror at the last and great day? verily there is many a Soul, that will find this to be a dismal thought at the day of Judgment, when he shall remember, so many Sermons I might have heard for my everlasting benefit, but I slighted and slept them away.

Therefore,

Consider 2. *That if men allow themselves in this evil, their souls are in danger to perish.*

Its true, that a godly man may be subject unto this, as well as unto other infirmities: but he doth not allow himself therein. If he be inclined to sleep, when he should be hearing the Word,

Word, he mourns under it, as his burden. If indeed thou hast grace in thy soul, then in case thy head hath been heavy at Sermon time, thy heart will be heavy for it afterwards. But when persons indulge themselves in this iniquity, when they compose and settle themselves to sleep, their state is dangerous, and their souls like to perish. Their spot is not the spot of Gods Children. Now was the Lord provoked at them who despised *Manna*. And their sin is no less who offer contempt to the *Manna* of the Gospel; as *Sermon sleepers*, who indulge themselves in this their iniquity, do.

Some it may be will say, but how shall we help it?

*Auf.* 1. As helps against this evil, there are somethings that men should remember to observe before they come to hear the Word. Beware of excessive toiling and moiling in the World, because that doth incline to sleepiness. And remember to be temperate in all things. When men overcharge themselves with meat and drink, and then come to hear the Word Preached, no wonder if they fall asleep, when they should be hearing for their Souls benefit. And if you find your selves inclined to this evil, remember to pray much against it before you come to hear. I doubt common *sleepers at Sermons*, remember not this. Did they pray earnestly

neftly againft this infirmity the Lord would give them power and victory over it. You muft be watchful in order unto prayer, and you muft pray that you may become watchful.

2. *At the time of Hearing, fome things are to be done as helps againft this Evil.*

Strive againft it when firft you begin to drowfe, shake off a fleepy frame. Stir up your felves to hear the VVord, as well as to call upon the Name of God, *Ifai. 64.7.* If fitting be an occafion of fleeping, rather ftand up, then fit and fleep and fin. And keep alive thofe thoughts in your hearts, which will be a means to prevent fleeping. e.g. The awful thoughts of the fpecial prefence of God. VVhen *Jacob* fleep as in his Journey towards *Padan Aran*, *Gen 28. 16.* he awaked out of his fleep and faid, *surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*: it is as if he had faid, had I been aware that God was in this place I would not have compofed my felf to fleep in his prefence. *Jacob* had more grace, then to fet himfelf to fleep in the fpecial prefence of God. Surely, if men did know that God is in Church-*Assemblies*, they would not fet themfelves to fleep there. Remember when you hear Sermons Preached, that God himfelf is fpeaking to you, in the way of his Ordinance, though by mortal men like unto your felves. The Treafure is from Heaven, though the Veffel that brings it, be an earthen veffel. You fhould therefore receive the

the VWord of God, which you hear,, not at the word of men, but as the word of God, *1 Thess. 2.13.* I remember I have read concerning that great Emperor *Constantine*, that sometimes when he heard Sermons Preached, he did rise up out of his Royal Seat, and would give that reason for it, *because (said he) the man that speaketh cometh in the Name of God, and delivers the messages of God.* Nay, when *Eglon* the Prince of *Moab*, heard *Ehud* say, *I have a message from God unto thee;* he arose out of his Seat. Men would be more like to stand trembling, then to sit sleeping, if they did believe and think of this. Again, if thou dost find thy self inclined to sleep under the hearing of the VWord, think how Satan is busie about thee, thou mayst be sure he is near at hand, if thou growest sleepy at a Sermon, and wilt thou give way to his Temptations? Yea, think with thy self, if I should sleep now, I should sin. There was a man that could say, he had not slept a wink at a Sermon, for more then twenty years together, and could give this Reason of it, *Because (said he) if I begin to be sleepy, that thought cometh into my heart, if I should now sleep, I should sin against God, and that I dare not do.*

Oh consider what hath been spoken. And learn to hear the VWord of God, with utmost attention of mind, and intention of heart. So your souls shall live.

*Till Dominus.*





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